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No. 7.

IDLE MOMENTS SERIES.

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A Mistaken Identity.

by

F. G. DAY.



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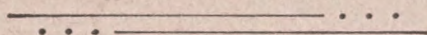
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"You are a little rebel now," cried Walter, joyously, while she clung to him, well satisfied.—Page 259.

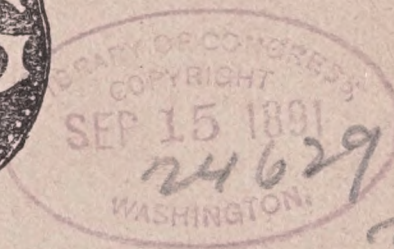
A MISTAKEN IDENTITY.



A ROMANCE OF LOVE AND WAR

—BY—

OSCAR F. G. DAY.



1891.

THE PRICE-McGILL COMPANY,
ST. PAUL, MINN.

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ST. PAUL, MINN.

H. J. H. Apr. 27, 1906

TO THOSE HUSTLING MEN WHO DO MORE TOWARD
RUNNING THE WORLD

THAN ALL THE SOLDIERS AND STATESMEN OF
THE UNIVERSE—

THE MUCH ABUSED
NEWSPAPER REPORTERS,

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

Chapter.		Page.
I.	The Colonial Homestead, : : :	7
II.	Love's Young Dream, : : :	20
III.	The Awakening, : : :	32
IV.	A Wedding and a Separation, : : :	43
V.	A Forcible Request, : : :	58
VI.	A Little Heroine, : : :	71
VII.	Farewell to England. : : :	84
VIII.	A Private Prisoner, : : :	93
IX.	The Jailor's Daughter, : : :	101
X.	The Ruling Passion, : : :	111
XI.	The Fair and the False, : : :	121
XII.	A Dreary Outlook, : : :	139
XIII.	From the Jaws of Death, : : :	151
XIV.	"I Do Not Know You," : : :	162
XV.	A Living Lie, : : :	173
XVI.	At Danger's Brink, : : :	185
XVII.	A Bitter Wooing, : : :	197
XVIII.	Some of Cupid's Capers, : : :	212
XIX.	A Double Discovery, : : :	230
XX.	A Tigress at Bay, : : :	244
XXI.	Face to Face, : : :	261
XXII.	The Lost is Found, : : :	274
XXIII.	The Man and the Maid, : : :	286
XXIV.	A Double Tragedy, : : :	298
XXV.	Forgiveness and—THE END. : : :	309

PREFACE.

Some one has said: "Oh! that mine enemy would write a book." It is written, and the critic may prepare his facile pen for the work of carnage. As a prelude, however, allow the author to say that this is a romance, and romances are not founded on fact. The pages are filled with love, for the simple reason that people love to read of love; there is such a rarity of the genuine article in modern society. Many may accuse the moral tendency, but this story was not written to elevate morals, it simply deals with the human passions as they exist, and does not seek to alter them; a herculean, and in fact, impossible task; so why attempt it? The book speaks for itself, and will rise or fall on its own merits. The author has sought to amuse, not instruct, and if he succeeds in whiling away a few pleasant hours for a few of his fellow beings, his object is accomplished. Brevity is not only the soul of wit, but is a blessing in a preface. Hence the brevity.

OSCAR F. G. DAY.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., FEB. 22, 1891.

A MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE COLONIAL HOMESTEAD.

The sun was fast sinking toward a golden, hazy sunset peculiar to southern climes, its copper hue and diminished light seeming to betoken a sleepy rest after the fiery ardor of a long day, spent in heating a universe, this section of which, at least, having been none too thankful for the favor bestowed.

The forest and song birds hastened their flight, as if in anticipation of the coming night, striving to make the most of the fading day. From the distant swamp came the muffled drumming of an occasional partridge, as he moved about, taking a sun-bath in Sol's last slanting rays, and a solitary whip-poor-will soared high above, sending forth his evening call, as if in signal to his mates.

A moss-edged brook struggled from among

the gray old rocks, on to a waving meadow through which it picked its way in a coquetish course, coy as a maiden keeping her first tryst with a young lover. On through the velvet lawn, beneath the low cut windows of the house, then curving to the right over a pebbly bed, losing itself with a rapid rush in the wooded slope beyond.

The house was a low building, with French and oriel windows, a broad porch covering the whole front, its huge, wooded pillars, nearly hidden by dark-green creepers, reaching to the top of the low windows in the second story. Nearly secreted by the drooping ivy sat a man of mature years, abstractedly smoking a long, queerly-fashioned pipe, half unconsciously listening to the warble of a lively mocking-bird that hopped about from branch to branch of the sycamore boughs overhead, cocking his head in a friendly way at the larger biped beneath him.

Suddenly the man's face brightened, and a look of tenderness swept over it, as the sound of a low, sweet voice accompanied by the notes of a harpischord reached him from within, and he thoughtfully beat time to the

accompaniment of the air with the bowl of his pipe upon the arm of the chair in which he was sitting.

"Dreaming, uncle?" asked a rich female voice, whose owner had but just turned the path around the corner of the house and thus suddenly accosted him.

"Dreaming but a pleasant reality, my child," answered the old man with a welcoming smile, "and am awakened by another pleasant reality."

"And what may that be?" asked the maiden, pausing to bend over his chair and print a soft kiss upon the curling gray hair.

"Your sweet self, my lady niece."

"Thanks, uncle," with a lovely blush, "and may I ever be such to all within this house."

The old man answered by a gratified smile, as the girl passed on through the low, squarely built door into the house.

The old gentleman had spoken the truth. A pleasant reality, indeed, was Ruth Garner, the only child of his own dead sister, who had survived for a few months the death of her husband, which had taken place on one of the Revolution's first battle-fields. Dark, glossy

locks crowned a low, broad brow. Dark eyes that would have looked serious, but for the slight mirthful droop at the corners. The mouth might have been a little large, had it not been for the sensitiveness of the lips and the beauty of the clear, even teeth. The form was exquisitely moulded and graceful in contour; but it was in the voice that Ruth's great charm lay. Though not exactly musical, it had a richness and depth of tone that one could not fail to notice as being exquisitely restful to the sense. A voice that was an index to the sincerity and lasting truth that lay hidden deep in the breast of Roger Fuller's niece.

The old gentleman, himself, came of a good, old stock, his father before him having been one of the early settlers in Carolina, driven there by the political and religious quarrels consequent upon the reign of Charles, and the persecutions pursuant to his too selfish policy.

The Fullers had been eminently successful, and no finer house nor broader acres were there in the colonies, than those that had descended to Roger, and would in time descend to his son Walter, now absent and following

the fortunes of the Continental troops, where the grand old man would have been himself, had it not been for the necessity of his remaining at home to protect his niece and daughter, not so much from the British soldiery, as from the loyalist faction of the colonies, which had made the Carolinas their chief stamping ground as soon as the English forces had gained supremacy in that quarter.

Fifty-three years of life in the colonies, the majority of which had been busy ones, had still left Roger Fuller a vigorous specimen of manhood. Though not over tall, he was massive in frame and erect in carriage. His features, though firm and large, were not devoid of a certain form of strong beauty; the brow was high and broad, the hair curled back gracefully, hanging to the neck in nearly white curls, the eyes were large, of a blue gray and set beneath delicate brows, almost feminine in their penciling; the nose was rather prominent. the mouth firm with a straight upper lip, and a broad chin denoting liberality of purpose. It was when he smiled that one saw the true kindliness of his disposition, and it was one that never failed to win the affec-

tions of a child, no matter what its disposition.

The women of his own family worshiped him, his daughter centering upon him all the combined love of the mother that was lost to her and his own share; his niece scarcely with less affection than could have been given to her own parents, had they been alive to demand it. The women on his plantation saw in him a true sympathizer in their griefs, and the men a kind and indulgent master.

The Tories of that section had troubled him very little, partly on account of his kindliness, few of them not having had cause to remember some deed of his in which they had figured as the beneficiaries, and partly on account of the strength of his household, which he could transform into a garrison on short notice.

Lower and lower sank the sun, just glinting the tree-tops in the "bottoms" with a crimson hue; still Roger Fuller smoked on in silence, listening to the distant hum of voices that reached him from the parlor.

The sound of hoofs upon the road caused him to look up, in anticipation, for in these troubled times it was a matter of some mo-

ment whether the evening visitor was friend or foe, bearer of good tidings or of ill.

He need have been under no apprehension, however, for nothing could have appeared more peaceful or undemonstrative than the new-comer. Mounted upon an antiquated and bony pony, which bore evident signs of being on the worst of terms with the world, and ambling along as if in doubt as to which hoof belonged next on the ground, rode an old man, tall of stature and spare of frame, whose appearance left no mistake as to the nature of his calling. Joshua Bell, the minister from the adjacent village of Beaton, had come to pay his old friend and parishioner a long-delayed visit.

“Prithee, friend Roger,” he remarked, as he neared the horse-block, and, dismounting, threw the bridle rein to the grinning black boy, who had followed him up the path, “is it not strange that chance should have thrown together such a pair as Gath and myself. As to bone we are well mated, but he needeth a few more hands in stature in order to safely carry my feet free from the rocks of the country road.”

“Truly, you are right,” replied Roger, answering, with a hearty laugh, the sally of the divine, whose jocular tone ill accorded with the doleful smile upon his long visage, “but he is lucky to be so, inasmuch as that fault has saved him from conscription by the enemy.”

“Aye, they are badly off for horse,” with a dubious shake of the head, “though vastly too plenty, I fear, in foot.”

“Time will show,” answered Roger; “but meantime come into the house, where the youngladies will welcome you right joyously.”

“In due time, brother. Meanwhile I would converse for a moment alone with you. The Continentals are reported to be advancing, not far from this place, and you may receive a visit from your son—”

“From Walter?—”

“So I surmise—nay have almost an assurance of; Walter, accompanied by young Henry Carter, whom his superiors have so lately deemed worthy of a captaincy.”

“Heaven be thanked, for the good news,” exclaimed Roger, devoutly. “It seems an age since I held my boy by the hand, and I will confess that I have been, at times, wildly anx-

ious as to his welfare. But come in. The evening is growing dark, and the ladies await us."

"Do you think it best to acquaint the ladies with the news?" asked the cautious divine. "It might disappoint and even alarm them, should the young men fail to appear. Is it wise to arouse their hopes and fears? There is certainly no little danger in this visit to the young men."

"No fear for them," said Roger, proudly. "They are brave girls and worthy of every confidence. It would be cruel to keep from my daughter, the news that her brother has survived the fortunes of war. The uncertainty we have been under for some time has caused her to mourn deeply. Ugly rumors have come to us from time to time, and it will be a relief for her to know that some of them, at least, were false."

"As you think best, Roger," said the reverend man thoughtfully. "We have had troubled times, and were it not for the part taken by our brave womankind, I do not doubt but that the cause would have been lost long ere this. Ah! what noble men and

women will these brave ladies give to our young country, in their children."

The old gentlemen entered the house where lights were being lit, and the clergyman was cordially received by the young ladies, who saluted him with a volley of feminine questions before he was fairly seated.

"Patience, fair ones," he expostulated, "one question at a time. Yes, fair Eloise, the good dame is well and quite recovered from the throat trouble—Miss Ruth, the poor Dame Bolton thanks you for the basket sent her by hand of the black boy Sam, and no less for the cheering words, also. Other matters, such as village gossip can well rest, in the face of greater and more welcome news, which I have no doubt our kind father and uncle has in store for you."

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Eloise, rolling a low ottoman to his side, and nestling upon it at his feet, "tell it at once."

"Does the daughter adjure, or the queen command?" asked the parent, playfully, taking her small hand between his two great ones caressingly. "For you know she is both to me."

“Neither, papa,” answered his daughter, half seriously, “the little girl pleads, and so does Ruth. Do you not, cousin?”

“Dear uncle, we are most anxious,” answered Ruth.

“Woman’s natural curiosity,” volunteered Joshua.

“Don’t mind good Mr. Bell, papa,” laughed Eloise.

“Very well then,” began Roger. “Once upon a time—”

“Yes! ‘once upon a time;’” interrupted his daughter, as the father paused to watch the exquisite play of her features. “‘Once upon a time’ what?”

“A good old man came to a wicked old man—”

“No! not if it’s you, papa,” insisted Eloise.

“And told him,” went on Roger, unheeding the interruption, “that his son—”

“Walter—yes,” eagerly.

“Was coming to see him soon—perhaps to-morrow ”

“Oh, papa! how grand. Oh, Ruth! all our anxiety and sorrow for nothing.”

“Dear uncle,” said Ruth, feelingly, stepping

to him and laying her light fingers upon his shoulders, "this is indeed a welcome tidings."

"Aye, children. Providence has been kind to us in sparing our boy when many another has been laid low. Offer up your thanks to-night to the kind Father who has so blessed us in this matter. You will remain with us to-night, friend Bell."

"Gladly, Roger," answered the minister, "in view of the events to happen. I would gladly be one of the first to welcome my old pupil home."

The Rev. Mr. Bell was sitting with his back toward one of the French windows, that opened out upon the side lawn, and facing the other occupants of the room. Ruth had passed to the other side of the room and turning, leaned upon the edge of the ledge to the large fire-place. As the reverend gentleman completed his last sentence she turned to look toward him, when her eyes rested upon the face of a man half hidden by the folds of a lace curtain, which hung at the window's side, partly covering the pane. The others were too much occupied with their own thoughts to notice the change that came suddenly over

her face, which had paled to the very brow. With a startled cry she sprang toward the window with hands extended, as if to ward off a blow, and spasmodically grasping the curtain, pulled it from its fastenings.

They all crowded about her, but could see nothing. She was too late and there was no sign of an intruder, but in a few moments the sound of pattering hoofs was heard hurrying up the road. Not a word had been spoken, but now with one accord they turned upon her three pairs of questioning eyes. The frightened girl sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands.

"There my child," said Roger, soothingly, "tell us what has frightened you."

"A dark face at the window," she replied, shuddering. "Some spy, I am sure."

"Calm yourself, my love," continued her uncle, "there is nothing alarming in the circumstance. We are too well protected here to fear trouble from mischief makers. Come Eloise, a song to cheer us all, then we will retire to the dining room, for I see Luce's shiny face bobbing this way, and that means a call to tea."

CHAPTER II.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

The night was far advanced. The moon had risen and was shedding its silvery light over the landscape, causing a few of the younger chanticleers to herald forth the false alarm of a waking day. In the negro quarters could be heard the joyous laugh and plantation song of the hands as they rested from their toil.

In the house all was quiet, its inmates having repaired to their several rooms, all save two; for in the little library (as the old gentleman loved to call his den, where a few old books and heavy carved mahogany desk constituted very nearly the sole furniture), father and daughter still lingered. Eloise had started to retire, but, as her father turned into this room, a sudden impulse seized her and she returned, and, setting the candle on the desk, sank at his feet and rested her elbow on his knee.

Reclining thus, and looking up into his face,

the girl presented a picture an artist might have studied with profit. The flickering candle showed the fine Greek profile to advantage, and gave a golden hue to the fair hair. The dark eyes seemed darker still in the shadow, and the light gleamed on the moist lips and shone through the transparency of the delicate nostrils. Could one blame the fond old man for spoiling her a little, or wonder at the soft, tender light that came into the kind gray eyes as he looked down upon her?

"So the little girl lingered to have a chat with the old father," said Roger, tenderly caressing the golden head with his huge hand, that was powerful enough to have crushed it, yet was gentle in its touch as a woman's. "When Walter comes, she will have another to love, will she not?"

"Jealous old thing," laughed Eloise, "it will be for such a short time, and then he will go away again and you will have all the petting."

"That is a rare, brave brother of yours, is he not, my pet? Do you remember how he broke the colt that Jupe could not tame, and how proud the old man was of it? Ah! he has been the pride of my old age as you have

been its joy. How proud I was of him when he fought the panther in the pine-wood, and came home without a murmur at his bleeding wounds."

"Oh! but papa," interrupted the daughter, "don't you remember how Henry Carter arrived just in time to save him, when the beast was getting the better of him, and how they brought the carcass home between them. How proud we all were of them."

"True, true! I owe Henry Carter one for that, but I doubt not our boy has paid the debt many times during the wars, and that reminds me: In my happiness I had forgotten to acquaint you with the full import of the message brought me by friend Bell, for Walter does not return alone."

"Who brings he with him, papa? Some of our acquaintance?"

"Aye, child, none other than Henry Carter himself, who has been dispatched on some mission this way, and will leave his troop for a few hours to pay us a flying visit—how, now, little one?"

The question was prompted by the sudden trembling of the little hand he held. With the

other Roger turned the burning face toward the candle-light, and beheld the flaming blush that mounted from neck to brow. The old man pondered for a moment as the fair head hid itself upon his knees. His thoughts went back to her childhood, and with lightning-like rapidity reviewed her life. Then his own young life arose before him with vivid distinctness. His own love for a fair being so like the dear one before him. Had he been blind? Had this all but stranger stolen in unnoticed by him, and won from his keeping the young heart he had held treasured so close to his own? Softly, oh, so softly the kind old hand caressed the sunny head, and bending to kiss the fair young brow, a tear trembled for an instant on the gray lashes, then dropped upon the bended head where it shone for an instant, like a dew-drop in the morning sun.

“Oh! papa,” exclaimed the startled girl, half rising and stealing both arms about his neck; “you are weeping. What have I done?”

“Nothing, my child,” and the brave old voice was a little husky, though it strove so bravely to appear calm. “*You* have done nothing. Another has stolen in and seeks to pluck the

tender plant I have reared and cherished— seeks to possess it, without warning to the old man that loves it so well. I like the young man well, and thought better of him than that he would not first ask my consent, before he had—”

With a sudden motion the pink palm had covered his lips, and the fair head nestled closer to his breast.

“Oh! don’t think that, dear,” she whispered, “because I, foolish girl that I am, have betrayed my secret to my kind old papa, do not think for a moment that he would dare—oh! I could never forgive him for being so base.”

“Then my little girl has given her love, unasked, unsought?” asked the father, reproachfully.

“Oh, how unkind! Men are so cruel. They handle plain facts as they would an axe, and hew with the sharp end. I doubt if I knew this myself before you, papa. The knowledge seemed to come to me with the thought of his soon return and the memory of our young days. Oh! do not try to fathom the whys and the wherefores of a woman’s heart. Happy is she if she can read it herself. I knew—”

was happy in his presence; that the day seemed short when he passed it beneath our roof; that when away I have often seen him in my dreams fighting hand to hand with the enemy, and then I have prayed for him mentally, that he might be spared to—to those he loved. It did not seem to me selfish. My love for you and Walter and Ruth seemed to brighten and expand as the new thought grew upon me, and to-night I have awakened to the truth, and—turn your head away—so—I know that your willful, naughty little girl loves Henry, with all the heart she has left after the great big piece she has bestowed upon her kind old papa.”

“But, after all, I must be content with but a part,” said he, sorrowfully, “and must sit calmly by and see another usurp my place. What if your jealous old father should refuse his consent? No; dear heart!” he exclaimed, as a startled look swept over the sweet face before him; “I meant not to frighten you. You shall have your way in this, but bear with the old man, who feels so keenly the loss of his little daughter, and believe that his one wish

is for the happiness of the dear one he loves so well."

"But I would not leave you, dear," said Eloise, clinging to him lovingly; "it is but a short distance to Delside, and I shall insist upon being here *half* the time, and then you could come and visit me the other half."

"What an ingenious little scheme it is," said the father, laughing softly; "but you must hasten to bed little one, for it is near the small hours, and my little girl will need to look her best on the morrow."

"Good-night, papa," whispered Eloise, with a mighty hug and kiss; "good-night, to the best, dearest, kindest old duck in the world."

"Good-night, dear heart, and don't forget a prayer for the safety of those we love, who, perchance even now are wrapped in sleep, with only the starlit canopy above them, their hearts looking forward in their dreams to the meeting with those that hold them dear."

He opened the door for her in his old-fashioned, courtly way, and watched her as she tripped down the hall and up the stairs. The candle glimmered like a star in the dark hallway, and, as she turned to wait a kiss to him

from the head of the stairs, it lit up her fair, happy face for an instant, then she turned and disappeared into her own room.

How many times in the months that followed Roger Fuller's vision turned to that pretty picture and caused him to sigh as his aching heart longed for the days of her childhood, when her laugh was bright and joyous, and the happy young face free from the lines of care and heart-break. Could he have had a look at the sealed book whose pages hold the secrets of the future, he would have spirited her away, far from there, before the morrow dawned.

With a weary sigh he turned to the window, and drawing the curtain, looked out upon the moonlit night. Far away to the East dark clouds were gathering, and a faint breeze was stirring the leaves of the old trees in the grove.

Gleaming in the moonlight, the highway could be distinctly seen between the intervening tree trunks. Coming down the road, at a canter, Roger saw two horsemen, the scabbard of the broadswords at their side gleaming brightly. He drew open a drawer in his desk and possessed himself of a pair of pistols. He

examined them carefully and silently placed them on the sill beside him. Nearer drew the horsemen, and now he could hear the clatter of the hoofs on the road. He could not distinguish the uniforms they wore, and waited breathlessly until they should reach the opening, where the view would be more unobstructed.

The low whine of a dog came to him from without, and then a sound as if the animal was tugging at a chain. Suddenly it fell to the ground with a rattle and a large hound bounded across the lawn toward the approaching horsemen. He had evidently slipped his collar in his efforts to break loose. The watcher at the window gazed in suspense at the onward rush of the dog. With a mighty bound he sprang at one of the mounted men, but with an evident bark of joy, then turning, bounded on before them, his expressive tail evincing every symptom of extravagant joy.

There was no doubt now. The dog could not be mistaken. It was indeed the young men so ardently expected, who now neared the house. Without other covering on his

head than its own gray curls Roger hastened to meet them. The greeting of father and son was a silent one. No words were needed to tell each other their joy, and the old man's heart was too full for speech. With brave loyalty he could give his only son to his country's need, and if Heaven spared him, it was a cause for thankfulness that words could not express. He pressed the young man closely in his arms for an instant, then held out his hand to the companion in hearty greeting.

He felt a tenderness for the young visitor that was new to him. If we care for our own truly, everything that is dear to them becomes in a like degree dear in our eyes, and Roger yielded to the influence, and in thought took the young man to his heart.

They assembled in the dining-room, and drew their chairs near together, conversing in low tones, that they might not waken the sleepers up stairs.

"You will excuse the light for a moment," said Roger. "I fancy you have both outlived your fear of the dark."

"If we had not," replied Walter, "the wars

are a good school to cure one of that little nervousness."

Roger was absent but a short time, when he returned carrying tenderly in his hand a dark, cobwebbed bottle.

"One of the few of the old '32'", he said apologetically. "There can be no fitter time than the present to draw one of the old corks, so fill up your glasses, my sons, and we will drink to the success of the Continental arms and in honor of your return, safe and sound to the old roof.

"It is wonderful," said Henry Carter as he held out his glass for the old man to fill, "the number of escapes we have had, and the bullets we have all but dodged, in order to be able to say, 'here we are,' at this time. The redcoats have done all in their power to prevent our drinking this glass with your father. Eh! Walter?"

"True," answered Walter, "mayhap they will be more successful in the future. "There are stirring times ahead."

"I see the mark of a scar," said Roger, "that looks ugly where the hair leaves bare the scalp. That like to have been a close escape, my boy."

"Aye, answered Walter, laughing softly, "I owe that to our friend Ralph Pepper. It was a wicked cut, which I partly parried, and he escaped my return blow. Henry tried a shot at him with his pistol, but to no effect."

"The beggar ducked as I fired," said Henry regretfully, "or I should have had him."

"'Tis sad," remarked Roger thoughtfully, "to think of those who were our friends and neighbors, as being armed against us. They know the country well and are harder to beat off than the red coats. Had they all been with us, Carolina would have had a different tale to tell."

"That she will soon, at all events," cried Walter. "A crisis is approaching which will give to our arms, all in the state, and I trust leave to us more peace than we have had in the past years."

"Hist, not so loud, my son," said Roger. "And now young men, as the wine is finished, be off with you to bed. You have but a few hours to rest, and then for a surprise in the morning. Your own room is vacant Walter; the girls insist on keeping it always in readiness for your return at any minute."

CHAPTER III.

THE AWAKENING.

It was the afternoon of the next day. The old man sat in his study looking out dreamily through the open windows. In honor of the son's visit a holiday had been given all hands, and happiness reigned supreme. Lesser cares were forgotten in the joy of having him with them again. The hands had all come up to the house to welcome him. Luce, the cook, had put the table in gala-day attire, and prepared a dinner that drew exclamations of delight from those assembled. The first excitement over, the reaction had come and Roger was trying to make himself realize the fact that soon they must say good-bye once more, perchance forever.

The opening of the door roused him from his reverie and he turned to confront Ruth and Henry Carter, the former with a heightened color upon her mobile features, and the latter a little ill at ease.

"All alone, uncle?" asked Ruth; "and in one of your dreaming fits, I'll be bound."

"Ah! Ruth, my dear; sit down, Henry; you were not absent from my thoughts."

The brave old man paused for an instant to turn away his head, that they might not see the saddened expression of his face. He soon recovered himself and turned to them with one of his rare smiles.

"It seems hard to part from him so soon, and to feel that it may be for the last time."

"Don't feel that way, sir," said Henry, cheerily. "For I think we have seen the worst of it, and feel confident that no ill will befall him. Walter is one of the lucky ones. I have seen him pass through a storm of lead without a scratch."

"Thanks, young man, for your cheering words," answered Roger, holding out his hand to the young man. "Walter has told me how you have saved him from many ills by your ready arm, and I thank you for that, also."

"Oh! he has done the same for me, many a time," said Henry, laughing. "It's a sort of

fair exchange with us. We got used to it years ago."

The old man did not notice the glances that passed between the two young people. If he had he would have seen that there was more to this visit to his room than appeared on the face of things. Ruth was ever casting a nervous, appealing glance upon Henry who, in turn, would answer with a reassuring smile, as if asking her to trust to his discretion.

"You are aware, Mr. Fuller," began Henry, after a pause, "that previous to my departure to the battles with the enemy, I made your house almost my home—"

"And welcome, too, young sir," interrupted Roger, "both for your father's sake and your own."

"Beneath the same roof, I was thrown into daily intercourse," continued he, unheeding, and rambling on in a down-hill sort of fashion, "with two lovely girls, whose bright faces and kindly natures did much toward making of me as good a man even as I now am."

The old gentleman pricked up his ears at this, and nodded at Ruth, with a very near

approach to a wink. This seemed only a natural continuance of the little love story he had listened to the night before, and doubtless Ruth was in the secret. He smiled in an encouraging sort of way for the young man to continue.

“And now, sir,” said Henry, almost trembling in his eagerness, “what is more natural than that the man should follow up the fancies of the boy, and ask this young lady, with her dear uncle’s consent, to be his wife?”

As he finished speaking, he had taken Ruth’s hand, and the pair stood before him, she blushing and trembling, he exultant and eager.

The poor old man sat like one stunned.

The blow had fallen, and he was little prepared to meet it. He saw them standing there before him, hand in hand. The handsome young man he was proud to call his friend, and the beautiful girl he loved next to one other the best on earth. He saw what they could not see, a pale faced figure tottering in the doorway to which two feeble little hands clung for support. Only for a moment did it last. The pale face was lifted bravely, the slight

form straightened, and the old man saw that the little girl had left him, and that it was a woman who advanced toward him, stern in purpose and firm as adamant, in what she thought her duty.

A sigh that was almost a groan escaped him as the full consciousness of his daughter's misery became apparent. He saw the battle that lay before her. A battle which she must fight alone, and meet bravely. She had been tenderly reared. No heart sorrows had come to her since early childhood, when her mother had been taken from them. She was like a flower that no rude winds had been allowed to touch, and now how cruelly-without warning had the blow fallen.

The poor girl saw her own trouble reflected upon the kind old face, and how hard the position was in which he was placed. His must be the hand to finish the stroke. She must not let her poor old father feel that she owed any of her misfortune to him. Softly she approached the anxious pair and took a hand of each in her own cold palm.

"Dear Ruth-Henry," she said, softly, "forgive me that I have overheard your confession.

Oh! may you be happy forever in each other's love. Papa, bless them—tell them how glad we *all* are that this should be.”

But still he looked at them helplessly, and it was only the imploring look in his daughter's eyes that made him speak at last:

“Eloise,” he said tenderly, “dear, kind heart; How could I refuse when you plead for them so loyally? Take her, Henry; the gift comes from my little girl as well, for Ruth was her playfellow and sister. I need not ask you to guard her jealously. You know how dear she is to all of us.

The sorrowing old man drew his daughter to him and clasped her face close to his own.

“My brave one,” he whispered softly, “it was well done. Remember where to come for comfort, close to your father's heart.”

“Never fear, sir,” cried Henry, joyously, “I think I know her worth, and heaven helping me, I will be worthy of her.”

“Uncle,” said Ruth, blushing vividly, then pausing as if ashamed to proceed.

“Well, dear,” said Roger encouragingly, “go on.”

“You know how soon Walter and—and Henry

are to leave us—and—and all is so uncertain—”

“You see, sir,” said Henry, coming to her assistance, “all is so uncertain in war, that we thought—Ruth and I—that we might be married at once—”

“Great heavens, young man,” burst out Roger, astonished, “you know not what you ask.”

“Papa,” said Eloise, raising a white, pleading face to his, “I think they are right.”

“Reflect, my dear,” argued he stubbornly; “what will people think? Such undue haste was never heard of.”

“But, sir—” began Henry.

“There, there,” said Roger, “leave me alone awhile to think it over. Stay Eloise. I would have you with me. You see, young people, you leave a champion behind, of no mean ability.”

Alone with his daughter, the old man did not speak for some minutes. The poor child needed time to recover herself. He knew that her pride would uphold her while the lovers were present. How would it be when alone with himself? Would she still favor this speedy marriage? Under other circumstances

he could not have allowed it under any consideration, but would it not be best for his daughter's peace of mind? He was too well aware of her strength of character to believe that her own love was a passing fancy. It had grown upon her little by little, this dream of love, and the awakening was a terrible reality. God help her to bear it.

"Poor, little girl," he said, tenderly, kissing the pale cheek. "Her first heart trouble."

"Don't speak of it, father," said Eloise, with a dry sob. "I have acted like a foolish child, and now I know better—now that it is too late. Please let it be forgotten, or if not, think of last night as only a dream. I am awake now, am I not? We must forget our dreams, and deal only with realities. This marriage is a reality, papa."

"Do you wish it?" asked Roger, studying her face narrowly, as he awaited her answer.

"Oh! can you not see that it will be for the best? Best for them, and best for me. Before he returns I will be accustomed to it. I will talk daily with Ruth about her—her husband, and it will be so much easier for me to forget what I now feel. Kiss me, papa. Do you not

see that I am brave? Brave enough to run and tell them, if you will but say yes."

"Be it so then; but we will go together, always together, dear. Here in this little study you can find peace and quiet, always a sympathizing ear to listen, and a loving heart in which to confide."

Arm in arm the pair made their way to the front room, where the young lovers anxiously awaited their coming, conversing in low tones, and looking at times with looks of expectancy toward the open door. Seated by the open window, Walter and Mr. Bell were holding one of their old time tilts at argument, in which they loved to indulge upon every convenient opportunity, and were too well occupied to notice the rather tell-tale actions of the other occupants of the room.

It needed no second look for the lovers to read upon the faces of both father and daughter, that the consent of the old man had been gained.

"Friend Bell," said Roger, "I fancy we shall have need of your services in a little matter."

"Indeed!" said the minister, wonderingly.

"I doubt, by your face, that much has gone amiss. How can I serve you?"

"Here is a young man who wishes to take upon himself," answered Roger, indicating Henry by a wave of the hand, "the shackles of wedlock, before returning to the wars."

"Bless my heart!" said Joshua, completely nonplussed. "And who, may I ask, is the happy maiden? Ah! no need to ask; blushes can speak for themselves. What think you of that, Walter, eh?"

"You see, I have been sort of in the secret," answered Walter, laughing; "the bivouac is a wonderful place to draw confidences from one's friends. Cousin, allow me to wish you joy. Henry, my more than friend, to you my congratulations."

"Young man," said Joshua, solemnly, "you have won the greatest prize Heaven can bestow upon one of its unworthy children, the love of a sweet, true woman. God bless you, boy!"

"When is the—affair to occur?" asked Walter.

"I think, to-morrow morning," answered

Roger; "that is, if we can prevail upon Mr. Bell to remain with us."

"Whew!" whistled Walter, "that is rapid with a vengeance. Then I'm off. I'll tell all hands at the cabins, and we will give them a 'send-off.'"

"You see," said Henry, in explanation, after Walter had left the room, "I thought it best to provide for Ruth in case anything should happen to me. I have considerable property, and it will make me so much easier in mind, while in this campaign, to feel that in case anything should happen to me, Ruth will have that for her own. Not that I have any misgivings," he continued, hastily, as he noted a startled look upon the face of his betrothed; "it is a fancy with me, and I am thankful that I am to have my way."

"There is sense in the young man's remarks," interrupted Joshua. "Exceptional cases require exceptional remedies. So you will lose one of your girls, Roger. Ah! would I were forty years younger, I would strive for the other one!"

CHAPTER IV.

A WEDDING AND A SEPARATION.

Although such short notice had been given, the house presented quite a gala appearance. The plantation hands had been up with the sun, gathering wild flowers, laden with the morning dew, and had filled every vase, and covered every bracket and projecting ledge in the spacious parlor with the fragrant blossoms. This had all been accomplished before the family were awake in the morning, and it was a pleasant surprise to them as they passed the open parlor door on their way to breakfast, and inhaled the fresh perfume of nature's own garden.

The atmosphere of the whole house seemed filled with that feverish expectancy that a wedding always inspires in a household, the daily routine of which is usually devoid of excitements of any kind. The father and daughter were the only ones who seemed to possess their usual frame of mind. Eloise had passed

a restless night. She was angry with herself for having given way to her feelings. She had also to confess that Henry had given her no cause for her to assume that she was more to him, than the playfellow and sister with whom she had grown up, nearly as closely as with her own brother. It was true the lovers had been singularly reticent in their wooing, and Eloise could remember nothing in the actions of either Ruth or Henry, to lead her to suppose that they cared for each other. Had her eyes been opened earlier, how much pain it would have spared her.

This morning she was a little tired, but no one could guess, from her actions, the heart-ache under which she was suffering. She carried her part in the general conversation, and replied to the sallies of wit, usual on such occasions, with an apparent light-heartedness, which none but her father detected as an effort on her part.

There was nothing sordid in her nature. She did not feel hard toward Ruth for having won the love she had wished for herself. She loved her cousin dearly, and felt that she was worthy of the love of the man she had won.

She must learn to forget herself and help them in their happiness, but she felt how hard it was to join in the general rejoicing, and wished in her heart that the day was done, and she could lock herself in her own room and pray for strength to bear her sorrow.

Outside the open windows on the lawn, the negro hands had grouped themselves, awaiting the ceremony, and as the family arose from the breakfast table, the sweet melody of a plantation hymn was wafted in through the windows, filling the house with its quaint strains, and seeming to breathe a blessing upon the young couple so soon to be united.

Blessings upon the open-hearted, untrammelled black man of colonial times. Careless and happy; ragged, and none too prone to cleanliness, there was a depth of love in his untutored nature that was well worth the winning, and happy was the master that had found his way to their hearts. The old people of a household were their fathers and mothers; the young people their children, and they were sympathizing sharers in the joys and griefs of each.

As the family entered the parlor, a subdued

shout went up from the assembled group, and many were the exclamations that greeted them.

“Lo’d bress Massa Henry!”

“We gib yo’ joy, sweet Miss Ruth!”

“Happy, happy days, chil’en!”

“Bress us all!”

“Halleluyah!”

As Henry had such a short time to spare, having to rejoin his troop on the following morning, no time was lost in preparing for the ceremony, and they all drew near the Rev. Mr. Bell, while he addressed a few words to the young people on the solemnity of the occasion, and the lasting contract they were about to enter upon.

There was but little attempt at ostentation about the personal preparations for the wedding. The young men had brushed up their uniforms and wore nosegays upon their breasts. Roger had donned the blue broadcloth he always wore for state occasions, together with a brand new pair of black silk hose, of Ruth’s own knitting, his shoes surmounted by a pair of huge silver buckles that were an heirloom in the family. His hair was fastened with a wide bow behind, while his tie

looked especially neat, having been knotted by his daughter with especial care.

The ladies had donned their best frocks, and made up with an abundance of flowers what they lacked in dress. Ruth looked fresh and sweet in an old-rose colored *crepe de chine* over-dress, parted in front, opening from the waist, showing a richly embroidered underskirt of heavy white satin. Her face was all aglow with excitement, which gave it a hue that set off her dark beauty in all its warmth and coloring.

Eloise, a little paler than usual, stood at her side, holding her father's hand, as if for sympathy; taking comfort in the reassuring pressure he gave her small fingers as they lay in his. A pale cream India cloth draped her perfect, slim figure; a bunch of crimson rosebuds were fastened at the throat, reflecting their brilliant hue upon her pale cheeks. Simple as was her dress, nothing could have been sweeter or more pleasing to the eye, and murmurs of tender admiration at her young beauty were heard from the dusky throng outside.

The simple ceremony was soon over, and no sooner did the minister's solemn tone proclaim

them man and wife than a shower of flowers, hurled through the windows, fell over them and at their feet, and a loud shout of mirth went up from the plantation hands, followed by another outburst of melody that came from the hearts of the singers. Listening to the song, and forgetful of all else but the excitement surrounding the wedding ceremony, the little household did not notice that a horseman reined into the opening from the surrounding grove with drawn sword. He wore the British uniform.

For one moment he halted to take in the surroundings, then raising his sword as a signal, he dashed straight toward the house. Instantaneously, from all sides, a troop of horse burst from the wood and surrounded the house. It was a complete surprise to the little party. They were all unarmed. The young men had left off their swords and were powerless to defend themselves, and there seemed no chance but to submit.

Two officers dismounted and entered the house, while the rest of the troop guarded the negro hands and cut off all avenues of escape.

“Whom have I the honor of addressing?”

asked Roger stiffly, as he advanced directly in front of them. "I need no introduction to this man," indicating the taller of the two with a contemptuous wave of the hand. "Ralph Pepper is too well-known to us to need introduction."

"Captain Harper, at your service, sir," said the officer, bowing. "You will pardon this intrusion. "It was not our intention to interrupt your festivities, but I must beg to inform these two young gentlemen that they are my prisoners."

"Had we our arms about us, you would have to *take* us, first," exclaimed Walter, hotly.

"Oh! be quiet, brother," whispered Eloise, laying a restraining hand upon his arm. "Do not anger them."

"It is as well, said Ralph Pepper, with a sneer, "that you have not, as it saves your precious carcass a few bullet holes."

During this colloquy, Ruth had turned pale and an angry light now shone in her usually mild eyes. Walking straight to where the speaker stood, she said, in a ringing voice:

"So—Ralph Pepper, you are the spy that

hangs about people's houses at night, and peers in at the windows like a common thief. Are you not ashamed of your manhood, that you should stoop so low?"

"I but served my king," he replied, flushing uneasily under her taunt, "and have not been guilty of self abasement in so doing. It is you rebels who should blush, not I."

"Then why do your cheeks crimson, even as you try to defend yourself? Hear me all," she said turning to the rest. "This man did me the *honor*" with withering contempt, "to request my hand in marriage, which *honor* I promptly refused. He takes this method for his revenge. Oh! it is but ill treatment Walter and Henry will receive at his hands."

"We thank you, sir, for the honor," said Henry advancing to him. "Meanwhile keep this in token of our sincere thanks," and before any one could interfere he struck him a powerful blow which felled him to the floor.

"Oh! what have you done?" cried Ruth, springing in front of him as if to defend him with her own body.

"Don't worry for that," said Captain Harper, laughing softly, "here, men, carry Pepper

out and dash his face with water, some of you. He isn't well liked in the company, and it will be a good one to tell the mess. As for your treatment, gentlemen, you are my prisoners and not his, and as such will receive such courtesy as one gentleman can extend to another."

"I see, sir," said Henry, heartily, "that you are a gentleman, and we surrender ourselves to you."

"Thanks, young sir. Do you give me your word of honor not to attempt to escape?"

"No, sir," said Henry, firmly.

"I am sorry," said the officer, "otherwise I shall have to bind your arms, and you, sir?" turning to Walter.

But Walter had not waited for the question. He was a man of quick resolve and rapid execution. With a bound he had cleared the window and a few rapid strides brought him to the side of the nearest trooper. Before the man knew what had happened Walter had leaped upon the horse behind him and had pinioned his arms to his sides, with an iron grip that few could withstand. With a wild yell he flung his heels against the flanks of the horse, and the startled animal gave a snort

and a bound directly toward the sheltering grove.

It would have been an easy matter, for a man possessed of Walter's extraordinary strength, to have unseated the trooper from his saddle and thus, apparently, have stood a better chance of escape without a doubly burdened horse, but his reason was now obvious as several of the men raised their pistols to fire at him, but feared to hurt their comrade in the attempt. They were so taken by surprise for an instant that they sat still in their saddles, too astonished to pursue, and Walter had a good start ere he heard the officer's voice urging his men in pursuit. A moment more and he had gained the grove, that gradually thickened into a dense wood and made a rapidly riding horseman practically safe from bullets from the rear. Here Walter disarmed the trooper he held in front of him by first divesting him of his pistol and then unhooking the sword belt, while his arms still pinioned those of the man to his side.

"Sorry to part with you, my friend," said Walter, chuckling grimly, "but you'll have to

take a flying dismount, as I have no further use for you."

He raised him bodily from the saddle and held him at the side, letting him fall with a crash as they came to a little opening among the trees, and directly into the midst of a thick clump of underbrush that made the fall less disagreeable than a contact with the hard ground would have done.

"Faith," muttered the trooper as he picked himself out of a tangled mass of broken shrub and torn uniform, and watched the disappearing form of Walter among the trees, "it may be moighty aisy whin ye know how; but I'm d——d if he ain't a young goint, entirely."

Just then some of the troopers dashed up and one of them held in his horse for a moment.

"Which way did he go Teddy?" he asked.

"Did who go?"

"Why! who do you suppose, you fool?"

"The horse?"

"Yes, yes, horse and man. Where?"

"To the divil av coorse, an' ye'd like to follow. Go on wid ye. It's meself that'll go

back to the house to get a wink at the purty gurls. They'll admire me stoile."

The trooper dashed on with an oath to join his companions. Walter, however, was too well acquainted with the country to allow them to catch him so easily, and he led them a chase which soon lost them, for the present at least. Making a short cut he reached the high road, and walked his panting beast to give him a little needed rest. He argued that his pursuers were still dashing about in pursuit of him, and that a little rest would give his jaded animal that much advantage, should they by chance again get in sight.

His thoughts were interrupted by the sound of hoofs upon the road. He listened intently, but as the sound grew nearer he was certain there was but one horse, the clatter being too distinct for a number of them. He drew his own horse to one side of the road, where he would be hid from view by the bend of the road, until the approaching foe was almost upon him, and looked carefully at the priming of the pistol, he held in his hand, smiling grimly the while.

"Whoever it is, he is mounting good horse-

flesh," muttered he, "and is coming at great speed."

In a moment more the horse and rider dashed into view, and Walter's pistol was leveled.

"Gora mighty! Massa Walter, don't shoot!" hallooed the new comer reining in the beast he rode so suddenly as to throw it back upon its haunches. "Its only me."

"What, Sam! and my horse Tempest!" exclaimed Walter, joyously. "How on earth did you manage it?"

"Dat's berry easy massa," grinned Sam, showing a row of ivories a half inch in width. "De sojer men nebber miss Sam, an I jest steal away an' saddle Tempes' an' git to de road. Hyah am de pistols an de swo'd fo' yo', too. Golly! I had a ride."

"Well done, brave boy," said Walter dismounting. "Here take this sword in exchange, and mount the trooper's horse. Now, Tempest, my boy," patting the horse's neck, "let them catch us, who can!"

Sam buckled on the long sword after he had mounted the horse and felt so much a soldier that he begged to accompany his young mas-

ter in his flight, but this Walter would not consent to.

“Ride back directly!” he said, “and tell them all that I am safe, and get a word to Henry, if you can without being overheard, that I will attempt a rescue before he reaches Charleston. You are needed there more than with me, and you are sharp, and may be of some assistance. Try to cheer up the girls, and tell them not to fret.”

With that he wheeled Tempest and galloped off at a rattling pace.

Sam watched him for a moment with a critical eye then turned and cantered slowly back.

Meanwhile the troopers, having abandoned the chase, had returned to the house without their captive, to the joy of the anxious ones and the chagrin of the captain. Pepper was wrathful in the extreme, and vented his spite upon the troopers in no mild terms, resolved to take satisfaction out of Henry at such future time as might be in his power.

“Sorry to have been obliged to come on such unpleasant business, said Captain Harper, bowing to the ladies as he prepared to de-

part, "I trust we shall meet under different circumstances at some future time."

"We take your words in the same kindly spirit, in which they are spoken," said Eloise speaking for them both, "and remember that a foeman can still be a gentleman."

The young officer flushed as he turned away. Such words from so fair an enemy caused his heart to flutter in a painful manner. "What would they say, at home," thought he, "if they thought of me as courting a Provincial damsel?"

With many tearful adieus, the party marched from the house at a quick trot pursuing the road to Charleston.

CHAPTER V.

A FORCIBLE REQUEST.

A balmy afternoon beneath the skies of England. On every hand stretch wooded slopes, gleaming harvests and well kept grounds! Farm houses nearly hidden by old ivy or climbing rose vines dot the landscape here and there. In the distance the bright sun glistens on the heaving swell of the mighty ocean, as serene and calm as if away beyond the gleaming orb, where its rays had not yet shone on a nation struggling for liberty—dyeing its virgin soil with the blood of its children, and groaning under the sorrows of famine and hardship.

Along a well-kept road, across which the fresh breeze blew, scented with the breath of clover-bloom, rode an old gentleman and his son, upon two high-stepping thoroughbreds. From the expression upon the elder gentleman's face, it might safely be inferred that the subject at hand was not a pleasant one, and the slightly amused look upon the face of

his young companion did not tend to lessen the old gentleman's choier.

"A beastly fellow, is that Kittredge," he burst forth, spitefully. "It gives my stomach a twinge every time I encounter him."

"He got the better of you this time," replied the son, "and, I wager, will demand an increased price, if you wish to possess the acres. Yet, as regards his personality, there seems to be no lack of friends of his on the country-side, and then, you must confess, he has a lovely daughter."

"Look you! Percy Taylor cried his parent, hotly. "I'll have none of that. Wind of this matter has come to me before this, and so, please you, I'll not have it said that the son of Colonel Taylor, of Rockfern, took up with his crew "

"Ease your mind on that score," replied the young man, "for gossip is premature and idle-tongued. Thank Heaven! I have no woman in my head to drive away the wits."

"You have been sadly lacking in that same quarter or you would have seen *that* nearer home to catch the heart's fancy," and the old

man gave his beast a spiteful tug at the bridle that caused him to rear.

"If you mean Kate Haven, I do not dispute the fact of beauty and all feminine loveliness. But what a temper! Give her the head and there is no telling where she would land a man. Yet I like her. She will make a good wife to some kind fellow who will let her hold the reins over him."

"Don't be an idiot," retorted his father, hotly; "you are either willfully blind or infernally perverse. You know my wishes in this matter."

"And, in this matter," said Percy, angrily, "it is as well your *wish* is not a *command*."

"Come, my son," said the colonel, calming himself with an effort, "let us not quarrel over the subject. Besides, this is no time nor place to discuss family matters."

The pair journeyed on in silence, the colonel busied with his thoughts, Percy aggravated by the discussion of a subject that was anything but new to him, and always distasteful. It had long been a crotchet with the old man that his beautiful ward, the daughter of an old comrade in arms, and his son should

marry, and, as is apt to be the case with a British parent, accustomed to being obeyed in all things, he had taken the most certain way to dissatisfy both parties, concerned with the whole affair.

Left to their own devices nothing could have been more natural than that the young people should have grown to care for each other. Their tastes were similar in many things. They loved to ride, fish and hunt together. They read the same books, and sang duets, in fact were in all things fitted to travel this vale of tears together. But the colonel's constant recurrence to the subject, and the taking out of their hands altogether any chance for those little romances that youth loves to enjoy at its own sweet will, had soured them against the idea, so to speak, and they had settled down to a sort of mild warfare with each other, which neither felt at heart.

Colonel Taylor, bluff old warrior that he was, fretted under this youthful rebellion to his will, and would no doubt have lead his son before a sort of family court martial had such a thing been possible. In fact, at the

present moment, he was formulating a little plan which bid fair to end, at once and forever, the pet scheme he had been cherishing for so many years.

Kate was the first to meet them as they dismounted at the old manor house, and a glance at Percy's face was sufficient to tell her that something had gone wrong. She followed him into the drawing room, where the colonel left them to themselves, and questioned him:

"Something amiss, Percy?"

"Oh, father has mounted his old hobby again to-day. Why, in goodness' name, can not he leave us alone in peace?"

"It's a wonder you don't hate me, roundly," said Kate, with a soft laugh. "It certainly is not pleasant to have me thrown in your face at all times and seasons."

"No worse for me than for yourself, I should think."

"Well, I don't mind it so *much*. You see he thinks it will soonest further his ends by pressing you, and so he lets me off with various eulogies of your good qualities, in which I always acquiesce, and that satisfies him."

"Many thanks," said Percy, sarcastically.

"I suppose he thinks I have but to ask, to have you jump at the chance?"

"Into your arms, so to speak," responded Kate, ironically. "Who can conceive of the prejudices of a parent? Of course his biased sight can see no other outcome to such a state of affairs."

"I heartily wish that something would happen to end all this."

"Poor fellow, how he does hate his intended. Shall I run away with the curate and put it out of the question?"

"Don't be silly, Kate," said he, laughing in spite of himself. "You know I like you. You are a dear little woman, and a friend I would not part with for the world. I'll go to my room and doff this dusty toggery and will try and forget the governor and all his hobbies."

"Do not worry," said the girl, kindly, laying a small hand lightly upon his arm. "Come down soon, I have a new duet to try with you."

The young man did not escape as easily as he had anticipated. The colonel had repaired to his own room, where reflection and confinement to his own society did not tend to soften

the bellicose mood, in which the somewhat rebellious conduct of his son and heir had thrown him. In many things he had been a kind and indulgent parent, but accustomed to the command of martial forces, and the remembrance that Percy had rarely crossed him in anything, led him to believe that it was impossible for him to be disobeyed in a case where he could see no reason for rebellion.

"I have not been firm enough with the young Jacka-napes," he growled. "I'll put the question to him flat this very day, and have it settled once and for all. Kate has been my daughter in thought for many years. She shall be so in fact before a new year dawns."

It did not occur to the old soldier, that his son might have inherited some of his own indomitable stubbornness and refuse, point blank, to comply with his wishes. Rockfern was a pretty inheritance, and, in return for it, he felt that he was entitled to pick for himself the woman who should reign over it, as mistress. He was getting along in years, and would see those who were dear to him settled in life, before he should be called away into the great unknown. Children should play about

the old grounds and sounds of mirthful laughter fill the old halls. He smiled to himself at the thought, and tender recollections gathered about him as he recalled the youth of his own boy, and the future he had planned for him.

The sound of footsteps roused him from the reverie into which he had fallen. Percy was returning from his room. In answer to the colonel's summons the young man stepped into the room. His father closed the door after him and motioned him to a seat.

"I wish to speak with you seriously, Percy," he begun "on a subject very near to my heart. You will probably recall to mind the thread of our intercourse on the ride to-day, and I trust that the answer you then gave me did not come from the heart. No, let me finish!" for the young man flushed as if to reply in anger. "I wish to lay the matter fully before you, and have it settled once and for all."

The old man took a chair and seating himself, paused to look at his son. Something in the young man's face gave him his first suspicion that the interview was likely to resolve itself into a battle of wills, and may have

caused him to begin in a softer tone of voice than was customary with him.

“I think you will admit that through all your life, you have no cause to complain of your treatment as a son. As fathers go I have been to you kind and indulgent. Your horses have been of the best; your allowance all that was necessary to have you hold up your end with young men of your own class. You have traveled whenever it suited your fancy, and have had your own way in many things. In return for this (you see I will do you justice) you have been all that a father could desire. Unlike most boys, you have passed through the follies of youth comparatively blameless. You have never exceeded your allowance, nor caused your old father one blush for any of your actions, and I am free to say—” here the stalwart old colonel’s voice faltered a little, “that I am proud of you. Now in order to complete my happiness, I ask of you, what any young man in the parish would jump at—ask my ward, Kate Haven, to be your wife.”

“Impossible, father!” cried Percy. “I have told you—”

"Never mind what you have told me," interrupted the colonel, mildly, though there was an ominous contraction of the brows. "We will pass over that. I ask you now in all kindness to reconsider, and do as I wish."

"It can never be," answered Percy, firmly, though without the anger customary with him heretofore, in discussions of the same kind. He saw that his father was fearfully in earnest, and it saddened him to be obliged to refuse.

"Can you tell me why?"

"We do not love each other. Oh! sir, why will you persist in the only thing that has ever come between us?"

"How do you know that?" asked the old man stolidly, refusing to listen to his son's appeal. "You have never asked her."

"What need for that? We are like brother and sister. It would have seemed a sacrilege to have proposed such a thing."

"Ask her. Remember that is all I demand."

"It would be an insult to do so."

"Will you think this over and give me your answer to-morrow?"

"That would be useless, sir. I must positively refuse you in this."

The young man spoke sadly, but firmly, and there was no doubt but that he was in earnest. His father seemed to realize at last that his son was determined. Deep anger was depicted on every feature as he stepped to the window and threw his arm in a sweeping gesture toward the fertile fields and wooded paths beneath it.

"There lies your inheritance," he said in a concentrated voice. "From boy to man, you have fished in those brooks, hunted in those woods. You know their value. Refuse me in this and they are lost to you forever. I shall leave them to her—to the lady you refuse."

"And I shall refuse to accept them!"

Kate had heard voices raised in dispute. and had hurried up stairs, hoping by her presence to put a stop to a discussion which she could foresee must end in a rupture. She had heard the colonel's last words, and the anger in his voice, and it steeled her against him to whom she had always been lovable and subdued.

Both men turned at her words, neither less ill at ease than the other.

"What! you, too? cried the old man in a

frenzy. "This boy has insulted you, and I take your part. I tell you both that I shall disown him for you."

"And, I repeat, I shall not accept."

"Leave us both together, Kate," said Percy, sadly. "You can do me no good here."

"I shall stay until he retracts what he has said. Oh! sir, he is your son."

"My son no more, until he will listen to reason!" roared the colonel. "Remember, sir, you quit this house unless you remain as Kate Haven's suitor. Never look on my face again until you are of my mind."

"Oh! sir, do you not see, you put me to the blush?" sobbed Kate.

"Not a word, young man, I'll have none of your damn'd impertinence," raged the colonel, as Percy was about to speak. "I'll leave you to sleep over it," and he tore out of the room like an infant tempest.

"Oh! Percy," cried Kate "what will you do?"

"Needs must, when the devil drives," growled he, moodily. "Not that I wish to confound my father with that gentleman, but I *am* in a fix."

"What will you do?"

“Go away, of course.”

“*Oh, Percy !*”



CHAPTER VI.

A LITTLE HEROINE.

On the following day matters were no better. The colonel kept to his room and refused to see any one, having his meals served in his dressing room, with which he consumed an inordinate amount of wine, until Andrews, the butler, reported in answer to Kate's queries that the old man had brought on a slight attack of gout, to which he was subject.

"There's no use in trying to talk to him in his present state of mind," thought Kate. "I don't see how it can possibly mend matters. His gout makes him crosser than a bear. What is Mr. Percy doing?" she asked of Tom, the footman, who had just entered, carrying a great-coat upon his arm.

"Beg parding, Miss," he answered. "Hi was just carrying this bit of toggery to Mr. Percy which the 'ousemaid she 'as just sewed

the buttings on, and, if you please, Miss, Mr. Percy is of a packin' hup."

"Has he mentioned anything about his departure?"

"'E says as 'ow 'e is wery hanxious to catch the nine-thirty stage for Lunnon, Miss, and I'm to horder 'is 'orse at height, sharp.

"His horse? Why does he not take the coach?"

"'E says as 'ow 'e will 'ave me follow with the luggage and bring back 'is 'orse from Epsworth tavern. Beg parding, Miss, but 'e his of a calling me now, and 'e'll be powerful him-patient."

Here was a pretty state of things. The colonel locked in his room in a towering rage, and Percy off for London, and all on account of her. Would it not be better for her to leave and prevent this rupture between father and son. She did not want the fortune. Her sense of justice rebelled against the wrong being done Percy, whom she loves as a sister, and she felt that it put her in a false light before him. Would he not feel that it was through her that he was losing all, and treasure it up against her? She felt that she could

not bear that, and the poor girl bent her head, buried her face in her hands and burst into tears.

Just at this moment Percy entered the room and stopped, astonished at this outburst in one who usually took the most serious matters in a jocular, and almost frivolous manner.

"Oh! come, now, little woman," he said, nervously, "this isn't at all like you, you know. Don't make it harder for me to bear."

"I can't help it, Percy," she answered, drying her eyes with her handkerchief, and giving a great gulp. "We were so happy before, and now all will be so lonesome and miserable—your father will blame you, and you will blame me—"

"Not for one moment! Kate, dear," interrupted Percy, hastily. "This is the result of an error into which parents are apt to fall. They are accustomed to guide our actions from earliest childhood. They select for us our toys and our books. They choose for us our youthful associates, and so arrange our everyday affairs that we are but machines to which they hold the lever. Is it strange, then, that they should imagine they can find us mates at

will, with whom we are to pass our lives, and thus guide our future even when they themselves are no longer upon the scene."

"But if your father persists in leaving me these estates," she sobbed, angrily, "you will despise me. I will not have it."

"You can't very well refuse if he wills it so," said he, smiling, amused at her loyal grief, "and I am certain I should prefer its going to you, to having it left to some distant cousin, to whom he certainly would leave it if not to you."

"Have you cousins?" asked Kate. "I did not know of any, except some once removed in Cornwall."

"We have some in the American Colonies. A sister of father's married and left for there years ago. I have forgotten their names just now, but father has kept track of them I believe, although they do not correspond."

"They shall not get it, I promise you," cried Kate, with a flash in her eye. "I'll take it myself first and give it back to you."

"Oh! hang the estate," said Percy, impatiently; "don't worry about it. Just remember that it don't worry me and that you shall

always be to me the kindest little sister in the world."

"Truly?" said she, her eyes shining through the tears.

"Yes, truly," and, with a sudden impulse, he bent quickly and pressed a light kiss upon her forehead.

"Dear old Percy;" she said, blushing under the caress; "I do believe you, and it makes me so much happier, and gives me courage to bear the loneliness that I know will follow all this. You will write to me?"

"Yes."

"Good long letters?"

"Don't ask too much. I am not much of a correspondent, but I'll try and satisfy even you."

"You start to-night, do you not?"

"Yes, at eight from here, and I meet the stage at Epswell at nine-thirty for London. I must go and bid the people good-bye, and I have some other things to attend to. I'll see you before I leave."

"You have made me feel so much easier," she said, almost gaily, "and somehow I cannot help but feel that all will come right in the

end. He loves you too well to carry out his intentions."

"However well he loves me, he loves his own way better; but I will try and hope with you."

Percy took leave of the help, whom he had known almost from childhood, and many of them were moved to tears, for he had been a favorite with them all. Promptly at eight, he bade Kate a cordial adieu and mounted his horse, while Tom bundled his luggage into the vehicle and followed after him up the road. Kate listened at the door until the sound of his horse's hoofs were lost in the distance, then retired to her room to have a quiet cry.

After his son's departure, the colonel emerged from his seclusion and resumed his former habits. His gout troubled him somewhat and made him unusually testy. This soon disappeared, however, and he was exceptionally kind to Kate, showing no traces of his former anger; but he never referred to his absent son. Once Kate made an attempt to start a conversation upon the matter, but the old man interrupted her shortly, and gave or-

ders that Percy was never to be mentioned in his hearing.

She received short letters periodically from the absent one, to which she never failed to reply at once, striving, in her woman's way, to comfort him with ready pleasantries, that were calculated to amuse him and keep him from brooding over the troublesome events through which he had passed. The fact of this correspondence was never mentioned by her to her guardian, nor did he seem in the least anxious to learn of his son's whereabouts or any particulars concerning him.

A little over three weeks from the time of his departure, the post brought her a letter from him, which, from its address, appeared to have been penned in great haste. Kate broke the seal and read:

HULL'S INN, CALDWELL ROAD, LONDON.

DEAR KATE:—I write this hurried epistle to let you know that I have conceived a sudden determination to leave England in company with an old college friend, who sails for the American Colonies. He is one of the officers that are to depart with the reinforcements about to be sent to the recruiting of the army in the colonies, and has kindly extended to me an invitation to accompany him. This will give me an active life, not devoid of adventure, in which, I am told, that country abounds, and I avail myself of the opportunity. We sail the day after to-morrow, so, you see,

I have little time for preparation. I will write you directly upon my arrival, telling you where to address me. Don't worry about me, and don't let them worry you. Kind regards to all, and blessings upon you for your kindness to

Yours sincerely,

PERCY.

With determined step and anxious look, Kate took this letter directly to the colonel, who was seated in his study looking dreamily out of the window. He turned as she entered, and was startled at the expression upon her face. He glanced at the open letter in her hand, and his face paled a little though his voice was steady as he spoke:

“What is it, Kate, dear?”

Kate choked for a moment as she tried to speak and her voice failed her. She placed Percy's letter in his hand and watched his face as he read it. A relieved expression came to his eyes as he read the few lines. He had evidently feared something worse from his ward's anxious bearing, and a return of the old angry light came back to his eyes, as he handed it back to her without comment.

“Have you nothing to say, sir?” she asked, firing up at his indifference. “He is leaving England to encounter dangers,—perhaps death.”

“He has deserted his intended bride,” answered the old man, coldly. “He has left his home; he has left his old father. What more fitting than he should desert his country, as well?”

“He has not deserted his intended bride, for that I should never have been even had he asked me,” cried Kate, who was becoming violently angered over her guardian’s stubbornness. “As for his leaving his home, it is you who have driven him to it. You know that one word from you will call him back. There is yet time. Tom can catch the stage with a letter which he will receive before the vessel leaves.”

“A word which I shall never utter!” said the stolid old colonel, rising in his anger and sending his hand with a crush down upon the table at his side. “He has made his bed, now let him lie upon it, and he may go to the devil for all me—by God!”

“You have forgotton yourself, sir,” said Kate, drawing herself up proudly, to her fullest height, and looking the old warrior square in the eye. “No gentleman should so far forget himself as to be profane in a lady’s presence.

You refuse to recall your son. You have driven him from you, and you are so little master of yourself as to let your pride blind you. He is going, perhaps to his death with no hand to stay him. Well, if a father's hand cannot bring him back, to say the word, *then mine shall!*"

"What do you mean? Ah! you have betrayed yourself!" said he, excitedly, and almost trembling in his eagerness. "*You love him in spite of yourself.*"

"You are mistaken. He is the dear play-fellow with whom I have passed my childhood; the dear boy that has been to me more than most brothers, and this true friendship you see is a tie even thicker than the ties of blood. You have repudiated him—you, his father, but I—I shall bring him back."

"I think you will find my son's pride as great as my own," said the colonel, mockingly. "He will scarcely heed a letter from you in this case."

"Do you not suppose I know that?" said the now fearless girl. "But I will go to London myself, and see him ere he leaves. I will drag him back. He shall not leave us."

“Are you aware, you foolish girl, that you are setting yourself in opposition to my will? I command you to stay!”

“And I refuse!”

The old man stepped to the bell rope and pulled it vigorously. It was answered in a moment by Tom, the footman.

“You are to carry the mail-bag to-night to Epswell, are you not?” asked the colonel.

“Yes, sir, hevery Tuesdays and Fridays.”

“You will hold it this time until Friday.”

“But, sir,” began Tom astonished at the order, “you said sir has ’ow—”

“Never mind what I said!” thundered the irate man. “You need not drive to Epswell to-night. That will do.”

Tom disappeared through the door as though he had been shot from a cannon, and Kate, seeing how useless any amount of expostulation would be, in the colonel’s present mood, left him and flew to her own room to think matters over.

The next morning Kate did not appear at the breakfast table, and the colonel felt that she was hurt over his outburst of ill-temper the previous day, and sent to her room with a re-

quest that she join him at breakfast, accompanied with a kind word asking after her health. The housemaid brought back word that she was not in her room and brought him a sealed letter, which she had found on the young lady's dresser.

He tore it open with trembling fingers. It was short and to the point:

COLONEL TAYLOR:

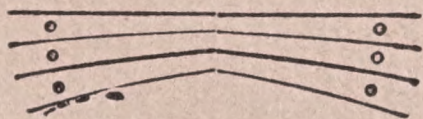
I have kept my word. I have left to join Percy before he departs. Tom drove me to Epswell. Pray do not blame him as I coaxed him and the fault is mine. When you will take us both back, as before, write to Hull's Inn, Caldwell Road. Tenie, my maid, is with me.

KATE.

With a low moan the old man sank upon the table his head buried in his arms.

"Alone," he muttered. "All alone in this great house. All that I have loved are gone. They think to break my will!" he said fiercely rising to his feet, "but they shall not! They shall return only as man and wife. Who knows," with a cunning chuckle, "but what it is best as it is. They love each other and do not know it. Before long they will find it out and come to me hand in hand, blessing me and asking blessing of mine. I'll wait. I bide my time. These old halls shall yet echo to the

sound of childish laughter, and gathered about the old hearth I shall see childish forms, whose youthful faces will reflect the likenesses of Kate and Percy."



CHAPTER VII.

FAREWELL TO ENGLAND.

Kate in the meantime had journeyed to London, only to find that she was too late, and that Percy had taken all his luggage away the night before and was probably several miles out at sea, while she sat at the table in her strange little room at the inn, and Tenie poured the savory cup of coffee for her. She had been fearfully disappointed by not being in time to intercept the young man, and, woman-like, had spared time to have a good long cry before her breakfast was brought in, and now, as she sat down to the light repast, her sweet face looked as fresh after the storm of tears as an April day after a thunder shower.

“I don’t know what we shall do now, Tenie,” she said in a lugubrious tone. “We have run away from home and have not succeeded in our undertaking. I don’t see how I can go back, for guardian must be in a fearful

state, and I think I may have said naughty things to him in the note I left, I was in such a hurry."

"Et is so var simple, m'selle," answered Tenie, with a smile that showed a row of teeth like pearls, "ef it is no possible to go back, why no go forward?" and the pretty little head made a comprehensive gesture toward the open window that looked out toward the sea.

"Ah, yes, but how?" objected Kate, yet half convinced. "We could not go to that strange country alone. Such an idea would be terrible."

"Something sure to turn up, m'selle," said the maid from where she stood looking out of the window. "Ah! Now my lady will be no more lonesome, for here come one two friend. See, m'selle, Monsieur le Captain Strong, and his so jolly wife."

Kate sprang to the window at once and was delighted to find that Tenie had not been mistaken. The captain and his wife were coming up the short gravel walk, while a footman and stable boy busied themselves with numberless pieces of luggage, which they were taking from

the coach which had brought the pair. Kate tapped at the window, and succeeded in catching the eye of the captain's wife, who smiled back and nodded her head in such an impressive fashion, that it threatened to bob off at every step.

While the captain was busied with other arrangements down stairs, Mrs. Strong lost no time in hunting up Kate's room, and proceeded to greet that young lady with a volubility only exceeded by the warmth of the kisses she bestowed upon the sweet young face, while Kate, on her part, was as profuse in her greetings, and clung to her almost as the fabled shipwrecked sailor is said to cling to the straw that floats by him. She felt how utterly alone she was, and also that this good sensible friend might give her good advice in the matter.

"My *dear* young lady," began Mrs. Strong, "so delighted to see you. What are you doing down here, and how is the colonel? No, don't try to answer. I have a bad habit of running on and asking all my questions in a bunch. Dear, dear, but I am glad to see you. I expected to see no one but strangers in this

stuffy little inn. Where is the colonel, your guardian?"

"He is at home—at least he was when I left there night before last," answered Kate, a shadow crossing her face. "Don't speak of him, dear friend, for we have quarreled."

"My goodness, love, you don't say so!" exclaimed the lively lady, raising her eyebrows in a manner indicative of surprise and deep interest. "Is there a young man in the case, eh, young lady? You haven't run away with a young man, have you?" And although the voice might have seemed severe, there was a little sparkle of excitement in the bright black eyes of the questioner, that showed how well she could enjoy a little romance of the sort, providing there was no real harm in it.

"Oh, no! How could you think me so foolish? We just quarreled over Percy, and—"

"Ah!" ejaculated her listener, filling up the pause, "*that* was the young man, was it? Now, when is it to be?"

"You don't understand," said Kate, in despair, and she flung an arm about the neck of

her friend and found relief in a slight flood of tears.

Now, if there was one thing more than another that would win the undying allegiance of Mrs. Captain Strong, it was tears. Especially the tears falling from the eyes of a pretty young lady. She was strong in her likes and dislikes, and never could stand homely people. For that very reason the pretty ones of her acquaintance came in for the full share of her affection. No sooner, therefore, had Kate flung herself, so to speak, upon her, all bathed in dewy tears than she resolved to make her cause her very own, no matter what it might be, and assist her in every manner that was within her power.

"Now, sweet Kate," she said, kissing one wet cheek, "just you sit down here and tell me the whole story, for I must confess that I am all at sea as to your trouble."

So they sat down, clasped in each other's arms, while Kate poured her whole sad tale into the willing ears. When it was finished the champion looked first fierce, then thoughtful. She stigmatized Col. Taylor as a mean and horrid man, praised Percy in the highest

terms, and then wondered what was to be done. There was a little roguish twinkle to her eye as she accused Kate of being in love with the young man, but that young lady was so emphatic in her denial that Mrs. Strong was forced to believe her, although she still retained a subtle belief that the end of the whole affair would be the ultimate wedding of Kate and Percy.

“Now, dear,” she said, at last, “we are two women who are not exactly decided what to do, except that you can’t go back to your guardian, at least at present, and the best will be to have a man taken into our counsels. I’ll call the captain and see what he says about it,” which she did, without more ado, from the head of the stairs, and interrupted him in a pleasant little quarrel with the landlord in regard to accommodations. He no sooner heard his wife’s call than he adjourned the little piece of pleasantry until some future time, and mounted the stairs, appearing in the doorway like a sunbeam, if sunbeams ever wear short, fierce-looking mutton-chops, and red jackets.

The matter was laid before him at once, but

didn't seem to puzzle him half as much as it had his fair helpmeet and her young friend.

"Simple, my dears," he said, with a radiant smile and hearty laugh. "Simple as A B C. My dear friend Percy has gone to the colonies—left by the Vulcan—very simple, you see, for I go by the Thunderer that leaves to-morrow. We'll meet in the other land. My wife goes with me—couldn't think of staying away from her Harry—plenty of room in the ship—wife's jolly company—what do you think?"

And truly what could she think. Here was the very chance she could have wished for, and the solution to the difficulty. Kate, whose tears were dried by this time, flung her arms about his neck and gave him a hearty kiss in thankfulness.

"Take care there, Katie—wife's abnormally jealous—better be careful," and the joke was followed by a hearty laugh, in which they all joined.

So the question was settled and Kate's effects were packed that night, and the very next day the party boarded the Thunderer. While the tide went out, the little group on the deck looked their last on "Merry England,"

and the huge sails above them swelled in the freshening breeze, looking like the wings to some giant bird that was bearing them over the bosom of the broad Atlantic toward that infant country, whose people were even then bleeding with the oppression of the parent power over the water.

Meantime things were gloomy at Rockfern. The days wore into weeks, and the weeks lengthened into months, and still the old colonel received no news from the absent ones. Kate had been so incensed against him that she had not even advised him of her departure for the colonies, though word did come to him that his son had departed for the scene of hostilities. As the days wore on he became more and more gloomy, confined himself in his room for days together, during which times he amused himself with such inordinate excesses in the way of rich pastry and wines that his malady grew worse.

His temper appeared to grow worse more speedily than his physical infirmities, and finally, in an excess of passion he sent for his solicitor and told him that he wished to make his will. Previous to this he had tumbled over

all his old correspondence, and laid aside certain old letters with colonial postmarks. He was evidently hunting up all he could learn about his sisters's family, for he read these over carefully before his solicitor arrived. Then the will was drawn up, an instrument which left the bulk of everything he possessed to the eldest son of his sister. In vain did the man of law remonstrate with him. He was determined, and the only thing that remained was to portion out the smaller legacies to the help, some of whom had been with the family almost since their birth.

Then matters grew from bad to worse, the colonel's temper became unbearable, and the household was in a constant turmoil in consequence. So here we leave him, a victim to his own pride and passions, growing weaker and weaker, nearing the grave, with no tender hand or loving voice to make his last moments sweet to him, and take our flight, like the Vulcan and Thunderer, across the broad Atlantic, to the shores of the rebellious colonies.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PRIVATE PRISONER.

In spite of the promises made by Walter to effect a rescue on behalf of Henry on the road to Charleston, the cortege moved on with little to interrupt the journey except the natural roughness of the road which was in a primitive state in places, especially when it went across small strips of swamp, over which layer upon layer of brush and small saplings had been heaped for a foundation, and a rather rough commingling of stone and earth thrown over them for a surface.

The party met the stragglers who had gone in search of Walter after his hasty flight, and one by one they joined the troop, each having little to communicate as to his whereabouts, to which Teddy, the trooper who had been so roughly handled by the young man in question, remarked that "the divil had gone away wid his own, for a divil for strength he was

entirely. An' a moighty polite divil, too," he added in explanation, "for sure he picks out the softest spots upon which to dump a boy."

Arrived at Charleston the next question arose as to how the prisoner should be disposed of, and unluckily for him, Captain Harper received orders to report at once at headquarters, leaving the young man temporarily in charge of Ralph Pepper, who hailed the new state of things with evident delight. Capt. Harper had intended to take his young prisoner under his own especial care, to see that he suffered no inconvenience, and the fact that he did not arrange the matter before he left the troop, must be attributed to the fact that he expected to return soon.

Pepper no sooner had charge himself than he ordered the detachment forward, and they set off at a brisk pace to another part of the town with which Pepper seemed particularly familiar. So much so that it almost appeared as if the whole affair was the outcome of his fertile brain. In fact such was the case. He had hung about the Fuller plantation until he had caught a glimpse of the little family party, on that eventful evening when his wicked face had

appeared for an instant at the window, and had overheard the conversation relative to the expected visit of the young men.

Then he had galloped off in the night and prepared for the reception of his intended prisoner. His chagrin can be imagined when he made the anticipated capture, to find that he was too late to prevent the match that he had dreaded, and that now all that he could look for was a revenge that would satisfy his personal spite. The prison to which he was taking the young man was an old solidly built house in a quiet part of the town, partially surrounded by a thick growth of trees that hid two sides of the brick wall, the whole encircled by one of those high, old-fashioned garden walls which made the prison effect, all the more realistic.

Henry had kept silent during most of the trip, busy with his thoughts and studying vaguely about plans for the future. Now, however he gazed at the dark looking building and, as the party halted at the gate, ventured a remark:

“Well, Pepper, is this one of his Majesty’s fortresses, or a private prison of your own?”

"A private jail of his Majesty," growled the Tory with a dark scowl that made his features look all the more forbidding. "One that I trust will please you, for you are likely to have a long acquaintance with it. We will show you how we deal with rebels."

"In return for which," replied Carter, "I will remember to show you how we treat our country's traitors, when matters assume a different aspect."

Pepper made no reply other than an oath, and striding to the gate, struck a few heavy blows upon it with the hilt of his sword. In response to the echoing noise, a window in the upper story of the house was thrown open, and a face peered out for an instant, after which the window was slammed down, and footsteps were heard approaching hurriedly. There was a sound as of heavy bolts being withdrawn and the door swung open, showing a fierce looking old man, whose most prominent points were his one remaining front upper tooth and a prominent nose, both of which appeared equally disagreeable.

"What have we now, friend Pepper?" asked the old man, with a leer. "The eagle for the

cage? When the dove comes not we chain the eagle, do we? Ha! ha! a handsome bird for a strong home."

"Be quiet, old fool," growled Pepper, "and let us in with our prisoner."

The door was swung open wider, and two of the troop dismounted, helping Carter to alight. As they drew near the doorway, he turned to give one last look at the winding road, the rustling trees, the blue sky with its fleecy clouds, perhaps the last he might give in life; for how could he guess what the dark walls behind which he was being taken might have in store for him. One last glance he gave at the blue vault above. Perhaps even now Ruth's eyes were raised to the same spot in prayer for his safety. Dear Ruth, his bride. How could they both bear it? The thought brought forth a sigh that was almost a sob, which shook his frame for an instant.

"Oh, you feel it, do you?" said Pepper, his face lighting up in an ecstasy of vengeful feeling. "I promise you that you will feel it more as the weeks go by. Move on there, men. We can't wait here until sunset, listening to sentiment."

“Don’t imagine that I shall give you the benefit of seeing that I suffer,” said Henry. “I promise you that hereafter no such satisfaction will be given you.”

His captor made no reply, but led the way through the low doorway, into the house, which showed few signs of comfort. Bare halls with bare floors was all that was visible. Up the flight of stairs a doorway stood partially open, and a glow came from the interior, showing just a glimpse of cosy furnishings, and pictures on the walls. A faint perfume seemed to come from the room, and the hum of a soft female voice came to them just for an instant as they passed. Henry wondered if the person in the room was a prisoner also, in the power of these men. Perhaps the poor thing was demented, else why should she sing in such a place? He glanced at the faces of the captor and jailor, but could read no solution there. The future would have to bring its own revelation. For the present his own concerns troubled him too greatly to leave much time to thoughts of others.

The room prepared for his reception was at the rear portion of the structure, taking in half

the second floor of a wing that had been built out toward the street. There were two windows fronting on the road, with heavy blinds on the outside, the inner frame having been recently barred with heavy straps of wrought iron. The slats to the blinds had been left turned, letting in a faint light that showed a bare floor, bare walls, an old post bedstead in one corner, covered with dark colored blankets, and a rough table against the wall. In another corner a stool lay tumbled over on the floor near it, the whole having so cheerless an aspect, that it struck a chill to the heart of the young soldier, used to rough fare, as he was.

A heavy door of rough hewn planks had been fitted into the door frame, in the center of which was a small square opening covered by a slide. The prisoner was particular to observe all the details thus minutely, in order that he might use his knowledge in an effort to escape; for no matter how dark or deep the dungeon, the hope of breaking into the freedom of the outer world never utterly forsakes the breast of a human being in confinement.

Henry was pushed into the room, the door was banged to after him, and the dark face of

Pepper at the opening peered in to bid him an adieu.

“Hope you’ll be pleased with your new home,” he sneered. “You are safer here than with your troop, and then it will give me so much better an opportunity to persuade your sweet bride that you have departed this life. Perhaps she will learn to console herself with your humble servant.”

He closed the slide just in time to escape a leg of the stool, which the tormented one hurled with all his force at the opening. Pepper laughed a hoarse laugh and turned away, stopping for a few moments to give instructions to the jailor before he left, and then the clank of his long sword was heard as he hurried down the stairs to rejoin the party in waiting in the road.

Henry waited until he heard the slam of the door in the wall, and watched the party as it passed the grated window, then he turned with a heavy sigh and flung himself upon the bed, burying his face in his hands, while the distant clattering of the hoofs upon the road grew fainter and fainter as the troop disappeared in the distance.

CHAPTER IX.

THE JAILOR'S DAUGHTER.

There is no misery so great to an active mind, as that which follows close confinement such as that to which Henry found himself subjected. His life had always been as free as the air. Passed in the wide school of nature, in the deep forests by day, and under the starlit skies by night, or chasing the wild game by moon light, over the boundless spread of virgin country. To him the confinement was most wearing, more terrible than to one who had passed his days in the closer confines of a city, or in the circles of a court. All these truths should be taken into consideration, in order to thoroughly account for the events that followed upon his capture, and which must be told although they do not go far toward elevating the young captive in the minds of the followers of his fortunes.

He was deeply and tenderly attached to

Ruth, his sweet bride, and was certain in his own heart, that the stars above could not outvie him in truth and constancy. He suffered all the more for her dear sake, for how could he know that she was not being persecuted on his very account. If anyone should have told him that he would be false to his love, even in thought, he would have scouted the idea from its very baseness. Yet he was a man, a fact that must not be forgotten, and where is the man that is wholly and absolutely true? They are only so by comparison. The best of his species is but powder, some slow, some quick. Woman is the flint, her eyes the steel, her kiss the spark, and then, oh! farewell virtue, farewell pride, adieu to constancy.

But why anticipate and grow garrulous over the inevitable? The tale unfolds itself soon enough, and in its own way. Henry was left comfortably to himself, until the shadows of evening began to throw his prison into a deep gloom, when the slide was opened and his jailor appeared at the opening. Henry glanced at the hard old face, and after a careful scrutiny began to believe that there was

little help to be obtained from that quarter, although he resolved to make the effort.

“Good evening, friend,” he said, rising briskly from the stool, and advancing toward the door.

“Now you see here,” said the face, while the slide was half closed, with a jerk. “None o’ your tricks. I know you are a hard one, but it won’t do no good to smash old Dan Giles, cause then you see, where would your food come from, I’d like to know, and your attendance?”

“Don’t worry about me, Mr. Giles,” said Henry, forcing a laugh, which he in vain tried to make mirthful. “I don’t intend to be at daggers drawn with you; it’s the old Nick himself that I am after. Come now, let us be friends. After all, money is the great thing. Money above all. What will you take to let me out of this infernal hole?”

“Can’t be done, possibly,” answered Giles, shaking his head till his one solitary tooth seemed to rattle. “I do pretty well in that line with Pepper, and I dare not cross him. Oh! I don’t bear you no ill-will, only I must do as he says, that’s all.”

"Name a price, n a , can't you?" said Henry, desperately. "I can afford to pay you well."

"Price or no price, is no manner of difference, captain. Here is some supper for you, and a jug of water. Sorry the fare isn't better, but it's the same as I have."

He passed through the door a small jug of water, and a tin plate containing a heap of beans, a small chunk of pork, topped off with a huge slice of dark bread. These the prisoner took and placed on the little table, not because he wanted them, but because he did not wish to offend the old man by a refusal. He began to see that there was little hope for him, in winning the old man; yet he did not wholly despair, for something might turn up at the last minute to aid him in an escape. Perhaps Captain Harper might see fit to insist on taking charge of him, and he would be removed.

"Do you intend to allow me a candle?" he asked, as the man was about to leave.

"Can't be done. Pepper says you might burn the place down if you are given fire. I rather think you'll have to stay in the dark."

"Well, old man, as you please. You are rather rough, but I suppose you think you are

just. Good-night to you, however, and no ill-will."

The jailor turned away muttering to himself, but in his heart feeling as kindly toward his prisoner as his hardened old heart was capable of being toward his fellow man.

Day after day passed by and brought little change to the confined man. There was a plate of vilely indifferent food, poked in through the door, accompanied by the small jug of water twice a day, sometimes by the old man Giles, and often by Uri, a huge, powerful, angular roustabout, whose other name nobody knew, nor cared for. He had been a satellite of Pepper's for years, and was as faithful to him as the starved dog to his master; a faithfulness that knew no restraint until another passion had taken possession of him, one that he hardly understood, but which was nothing more nor less than a savage form of love, but of that more anon.

Henry pined for freedom, pined for society, for his friends and loved ones, and finally arrived at such trivial matters as to pine for a good clean wash for his face and hands. To be sure he could pour a few drops of his drink-

ing water from the jug, and wet his face with it, but he was obliged to let it dry as it would, for want of a towel. Then an event occurred which changed the tenor of his whole imprisonment. One morning he heard the slide open at the usual hour, and turned to take the food supply from the hands of his jailor, when he started and fairly gasped. In place of his usual captors, there was the dark face of a most lovely girl, that lookd at him with wonder, and finally turned rosy red to the very neck, at his apparently interested glance.

The face, as far as he could see, was of a beautiful creole type, with a wreath of dark wavy hair above a low forehead; the brows heavy but finely pencilled, outlining eyes that were large, dark and full of a slumbering fire; eyes of that peculiar deep hazel shade that is so hard either to describe or resist. The lips, even in that quick glance, he could see were red and moist; the cheeks full, and tinted with the flush of health, the crown of beauty; in short, a young, passionate bud of womanhood, waiting for the sun of love to unfold it into the full ripe blossom. Could one blame him that a little interest was awakened in his mind; that

there was an inviting animation in his face as he stepped to the opening and took the plate from her hands.

"Thanks, maiden," said Henry looking at her in continued surprise, "but pray tell me if it be not too bold a request, how came you here? Beauty in a habitation like this is out of place."

"'Tis where I should be, sir. I am Jessaline, the daughter of your jailor," and she blushed as she said it, probably from the young man's compliment. "I did not know that a young man had been brought here. I thought the rebels were all old and ugly."

"Not all so, fair one, nor many as plain as I. There are many who could teach you love, and give you kiss for kiss and be well worthy even your dark beauty."

"Fie! fie! sir prisoner," answered she, laughing softly, well pleased at his flattery. "Let me see that you eat your meal, or I shall say that you ill appreciate me. Yet stay, it is a poor fare to offer you," and before he could remonstrate she had bounded away, leaving a subtle odor behind her. She returned soon, however, with a small cup of jelly, the leg of a

fowl, and a piece of delicate cake which she handed him. "The fare is too poor for a gentleman," she said in explanation. "Now let me see you eat."

Henry needed no second invitation. The delicacies tempted him, and he leaned close to the opening and enjoyed the treat, the eyes of the lady following his every movement with evident delight. She studied his face, noticed his fine proportions, and almost unconsciously strange thoughts went whirling through her head, fancies that made her pant as she read them to herself. Poor girl. She had been brought up almost alone, and at eighteen had seen little of books or society, and the child of nature was beginning to meet her first passion. One only in its infancy as yet, but likely to do her irreparable ill.

For his part Henry was delighted. Here was a moment's respite from the gloom of the prison life he had been passing, and it eased his mind so happily, that he almost laughed, such a relief did he feel.

"Now tell me, sweet one," he said, "how did this task fall to you on this day? How came they to let you see after their surly prisoner?"

"Father has been called away for a time, and I told Uri that I would see to you to-day as I wanted him to go into town for me. Uri will do anything for me, even more than for father or the other; so he is in town, and I am here to see to you."

"And whom do you mean by the other?"

"Why, Pepper."

"And what is Pepper to you? Are you his sweetheart?"

"Oh! no—no—I hate him, and I have no one I call sweetheart."

"So you love no one?" said Henry handing her the cup which he had emptied of its contents, "and are so beautiful."

She took the proffered vessel from him, and as she did so their hands touched, perhaps accidentally, perhaps by a desire on her part to touch him. As she did so a thrill seemed to pass over her by some unforeseen agency. Her fingers closed over his for an instant, her eyes seemed to swim and her handsome face and moist lips were dangerously near the opening, then with a sudden bound she sped away, forgetting to close the aperture as she left.

She was startled at this new feeling, that had

come over her, and which as yet, she could not fathom. She felt drawn towards this man, as none other had ever drawn her before. She blushed hotly, and a tremor seized her as she realized how near she had come to allowing their lips to meet. She felt almost sorry now that she had not followed up the inclination. How would it have effected her? If the bare touch of his lips to her hand, had filled her with such a new and subtile feeling, how would the pressure of his lips to hers have seemed to her? She thrilled as she closed her eyes, and allowed her imagination to run riot —and she was lost to herself.

CHAPTER X.

THE RULING PASSION.

The advent of his jailor's daughter brought quite a change to the daily existence of the prisoner. So different was the day passed, that it was little wonder that he should begin to speculate as to whether the maiden or Uri was to bring him the necessities of life at the stated intervals, for the dark beauty either could not come at all times, or else was sensible enough to know that she would be better thought of should she appear to him less frequently, although it was a self-denial on her part. She was of a fierce disposition, strongly moved either to ill or good, as the case might be. She was wakeful during the nights, tossing uneasily on her couch, and thinking incessantly of the handsome young stranger, who lay in prison so near to her own room.

Nor was Henry unconscious of the effect he was producing upon the young and suscepti-

ble heart. At first he rather resented her soft glances, thinking only of Ruth, but gradually he began to see what an advantage the state of things might bring to him, and he began to encourage her a little, in return for which he received many little favors. At one time he begged that he might have a tin basin and a quantity of water, for he felt sadly in need of a good wash, since he had been compelled to content himself with a few drops each day poured from his jug. She flew at once to get it for him, and returned with a large vessel, a basin, some soap, and a rough towel. The latter articles she succeeded in passing through, but the vessel containing the water was too large and could not go through the opening.

“Oh! how vexatious,” she exclaimed, with a pretty pout. “What shall we do?”

“This need trouble us little,” said Henry. “See, I hold the basin here, while you pour it full.”

“Oh! to be sure—how simple—hold it close, please, for this is heavy, and I cannot hold it long.”

She lifted the heavy vessel, which seemed too great for her slight wrists, and Henry passed

one hand through, closing his fingers about her arm, to assist. As she felt the pressure she trembled violently and her hand shook, while a wave of color passed over brow and neck, then with a sudden impulse ere she lowered the jug, she curved her handsome neck and her warm lips touched his hand. Henry was but human, and some of her own passion seemed to flow into his veins at the touch, and a new and strange light came to his eyes, for the ruling passion had begun to take possession of him.

“Take care, Jessaline,” he said, “I am but a prisoner, yet prisoners feel. Ah! all too deeply, sometimes.”

“I care naught,” said the maid, clinging close to the opening, and panting strangely. “Think you not that captors may also feel—Henry?”

“Think not of me but cast your thoughts on others. Now, go, while I make use of this refreshing water, your kindness has allowed me.”

“She gazed on him fondly while he spoke, and quickly passed one shapely arm through the opening, clasping him about the neck and

drawing him close to her. Their cheeks touched, hers hot and flushed, her bare round arm about his neck, almost making his head swim. Alas! where was Ruth, where honor, where his love? Were all forgotten? Their eyes looked into each other with burning intensity. Slowly the iron entered both their souls, and their lips met in a long clinging caress, that seemed to consume with the fire of its passion. Jessaline's eyes closed, she gasped and seemed about to faint in the ecstasy of her delight.

"Go now, sweet one," said Henry, hoarsely. "Leave me for a time and return soon."

She did not speak, but pressed her lips again to his and closed the slide. Henry turned, almost angry with himself, yet trying to excuse his actions by the thought that his object was his ultimate escape, an excuse which made him ashamed of himself, for he felt that it was but half a truth, and that at the bottom a guilty feeling was tugging at his heart.

He brought his table to the window and with the greatest satisfaction proceeded to enjoy himself as only a man can who has been accustomed to his morning dip in the brook,

or a sponge bath on a cold winter morning, and has been denied the pleasure for a long time. Stripped to the waist he rubbed himself until his fair flesh glowed with the treatment. Then he did a little laundry work, by the way, giving his shirt a washing, and hanging it over the bars to the window to dry. Throwing his coat over his shoulders loosely, he seated himself upon the stool and was about to indulge in gloomy reflections when he heard the slide open and, turning, he beheld the impassioned face of Jessaline at the opening.

“What, back so soon!” he cried, striding to the door. “Where did you go to?”

“Do not ask me!” she cried, passionately. “I could not leave—I have been waiting until you should call.”

Henry held up her chin with one hand while he looked questioningly into her face, but this time she neither blushed nor turned away her eyes, but looked at him boldly, and almost with a glance of triumph.

“Jessaline, you have—”

Her hand was over his mouth in an instant. “Well, what if I have?” she said, dog-

gedly. "Who has a better right? I love you. You love me. In that is everything."

"See here, Jessaline," said Henry, hoarsely, passion and good sense contending for the mastery. "We are wrong—at least I am—to have given away to my feelings, for I am not free to give what you so freely give me. I am wedded, and my love belongs to another."

Jessaline drew back for an instant, an angry light blazing in her eyes. She showed in that moment the depth of her fierce nature in a dozen ways. She panted with anger and jealousy, then glided near to him again and drew his face about so that the light shone full upon it, and holding him thus seemed to try to read his soul. As she did so, her expression changed, and she laughed mockingly, as she pressed her lips to his a dozen times.

"What care I for your marriage. I heard of it, from hearing Pepper inform my father. She is welcome to her marriage, while I have your love. And that I have now, for I read your soul in your eyes. I know that your heart is filled with me. That as you lie upon your couch at night visions of myself are before you, even as you appear to me, and yet you

have seen but my face, for the hall-way is dark, and gives you no more of me. Ah! could you but see me, but clasp this form in your arms, never would you doubt the worthiness of your Jessaline to be all in all to you. I know this, for in my room have I casts of statues of beautiful women, and often when I have been about to retire, have I compared their shapely whiteness with my glowing flesh, and I have not suffered by the comparison. And now have I met the one man on whom I could bestow myself—you, my love, upon whom I bestow these kisses, the first I have ever given a man other than my father, and myself will I give to you, as willingly and as freely.”

What a position was this for a young man to be placed in, who was already almost half in love with the object. Her passion overpowered him, and almost won him to herself, yet he made a slight struggle with himself, hoping at the same time, that he would fail.

“Listen, Jessaline,” he said, striving to suppress the passion in his voice, “I owe my duty, my allegiance to another, but even so, and should I forget that duty, it would be little, for I am a man, and the world remembers naught

that men do, against them, nor does it blame them that they stray for a while from the paths of rectitude. With you, it would be different. What more could we be to each other than guilty partners in a guilty passion? Reflect, ere it is too late. Mind, I do not wish to lay the stress of this upon you. Should we go on to the end, the fault would be equally mine, the crime greater, for you injure no one but yourself, while I—I wrong all. Come, Jessaline, say that the cost is too great.”

For answer, she drew his head to hers and caressed him, as only a passionate woman can:

“You are mine at heart, and mine you shall be in fact,” she said. “You are bound to me, heart to heart, and I shall do only as I please with you. I read in your eyes that you covet me—well, I am yours, so say no more about duty, for that is past. Where passion rules, throw duty to the winds. Oh! my love, my love, how do you think I could live without you now? You have aroused in me a sleeping dream that consumes me. Till I met you I did not live. I was but a girl, who existed, from day to day, until the king of her heart should come. He came, sweet love, my heart awoke,

the blood coursed through my veins, and I lived—because I loved.”

“Live, then, and love,” cried Henry, giving himself up entirely to the passion inspired by this strange young woman. “Let us forget all else in this gloomy place, but that love lives, and that we are love.”

“Do you think that I will leave you to pass all your time in this dark room,” she asked, twining both her fair arms about his neck, though the rough edges of the opening scratched them as she passed them through, “while I have the cosiest place in all Charleston for my very own. “Listen, love,” her warm moist lips pressed close to his: “No one is on this floor beside myself. You must have noticed the room as you came up the stairs, on your first arrival. It is in the front corner of the house, and no one ever intrudes there. Uri and my father sleep on the lower floor, and never come here, except to look after you at their regular hours. Uri carries the keys to your room, and I can easily get them from him, and have a duplicate made before I return them. There is my own little room, as much my home as if it were my castle. You can escape for a

time, each day, from your captivity, to the captivity of these arms."

"Whose clasp is as soft and sweet," cried he, passionately, "as the heart of the sweet tempter whose kisses set my soul on fire."

"Now, good-bye, my love," she replied hurriedly. "I hear Uri down stairs, and I must not arouse his suspicions."

With an embrace and caress, as strong as her own passionate nature, she left him, closing and fastening the slide in the door ere she left.



CHAPTER XI.

THE FAIR AND THE FALSE.

Left alone, Henry threw himself upon the couch, his heart filled with conflicting emotions. For a time he felt his soul consumed with the passion inspired by the fierce girl, and he seemed to be in a dream, almost painful in its intensity. Guilty, he knew he was at heart, and more so that he had not the strength of character to resist the feeling that was drawing him toward a vortex which might engulf him in his own shame. What if he should end by becoming so much the slave of this beautiful being, that he would forget the sweet pure woman who was now his bride, and live contented in this prison life. The idea was madness to him, and he resolved to combat with all his will, the subtle influence he felt stealing over him.

His brain filled with the events that had passed during the last few days, he tried to become composed, to think rationally, and he

forced himself to look the future in the face. He felt that he must be master of himself, and put aside this last temptation. Perhaps the maiden herself would thank him for it in time, and see that he had done it for the best. In spite of himself he could not help a pang at the thought of putting by the sweet gift so freely offered him. He was not a saint, and yet a just man would not hesitate to say that he was more virtuous than many would have been, under the same circumstances, for young blood is warm, and young brains think but little of consequences. After a time he sank into a troubled slumber, in which visions of Ruth and Jessaline contended for the mastery.

The dark beauty, however, was little troubled in regard to the righteousness of her resolve. A woman's trouble comes only with the first thoughts of her love. When she has determined upon the course she will take, there is no looking back, no desire to retrace the step resolved upon. Her whole ambition is to fulfill the desire of her heart.

Jessaline allowed no time to elapse before commencing upon her plan of action. She at once sought out Uri, and entered into con-

versation with him, resolved to do her utmost to further her plans. The face of the unkempt giant beamed upon her as she entered the room, where he was busy in preparing a fowl for the evening repast.

“Well, Uri,” she said, in her pleasantest tone of voice, which was all the more pleasant to the hearer, for the reason that it was not often that he received such kind attention from her, “when, pray, is father to be back again?”

“Some time yet, Miss Jess,” he answered in a deep voice, glancing at her almost with hungry eyes. “The old gent’s off with Mr. Pepper, on some bit of work. I wish he’d a taken me, I do, only p’raps I’d rather take care on you.”

“Of course you would, Uri, and I feel perfectly safe here under your care. You would n’t allow any one to harm me, I know.”

“Harm you,” said the gaunt giant, raising his form to its full height, and stretching out one long arm, while his eyes blazed fiercely. “Let them try—that’s all. Let one, no matter who he be, but dare to lay a finger on you, and I’d tear him to pieces.” A threat which his fierce aspect and wiry frame, made him appear capable of doing.

"Peace, Uri!" exclaimed the girl, almost alarmed at the passion she had invoked. "I have no doubt that you would do anything for me, and when the time comes, I know that you will prove your assertion."

"Try me and see," he said, resuming his work quietly.

Jessaline perched upon the edge of the table and watched him for a moment, a little in doubt how to get at her object. She knew that Uri would do anything she asked of him, but still she was sensible of the fact that she must not rouse his jealousy. His feeling for her, she could control, but should she arouse the other demon, the result might be dangerous to the man she loved. For a moment she thought, and then her resolve was made.

"Uri," she said, "I want you to do an errand for me, that will put you to some little trouble. Will you?"

"There's nothing I'd not do for you—that you know," and he waited silently for her command.

She thought for a few moments before speaking. Her ultimate object was to get a key to the door that separated her from Henry, the

barrier that prevented her from throwing herself into his arms. She knew that if she made any allusion to the one key, which she coveted, the suspicions of the simple fellow might be aroused. Could she keep his mind away from her one object, she was safe. His mind was only capable of grasping one thing at a time.

"How many keys have you on your bunch?" she asked, finally.

"There's four," he answered, taking them from his belt. "There's the one to the wall gate, that's the big iron one; this one to the barred door, front; this brass one to the cellar, and the big copper one to the new door up stairs."

Now the latter was the one most desired by the girl. So far he had no suspicions. She must keep him so.

"Often, when you are all away," she said, calmly, "I have only the key to my own room, and am locked in the house, and behind that wall. No one has ever thought that I might have use for the keys myself. I want you to go and have a duplicate bunch made for me at the locksmith's."

"Where's the use?" asked Uri. "Can't you

ask the old man to let you keep these when we go out?"

"He wouldn't like that, and besides, I would not like to be disturbed by having to get up at all hours to let you in."

"I don't just like to," said he, stubbornly. "The governor wouldn't like it."

Jessaline began to despair at his obstinacy. She had hardly expected that he would refuse her, even for an instant, unless his suspicions were aroused; yet he seemed about to frustrate her plans after all.

"Now see here, Uri," she said, appealingly, "You are all wrong. Suppose that when you are away, and I am alone, the rebels should attack the house, or it should be set on fire, how would it fare with me? Would you wish to see me burned alive, like a rat in a trap?"

"Before God, no!" he cried, "why didn't you say so afore? Good Lord! what a fool I was, not to think on it long ago. I'll go at once, or when you say."

The girl's eyes flashed with triumph, and her heart leaped. She would succeed at last; her passion would have full sway. She would be able to get to her love. She almost panted in

her eagerness, yet made a strong effort to keep calm. "There," she said, handing him some silver, "take this, and get me them made at once—before night, if you care for my safety."

Uri caught up his hat and strode out at the door without another word. Like all simple people of one idea, he could think of nothing else when she had impressed the necessity upon him.

"Don't whisper a word of it to them. Remember!" she cried to him, as he went.

"Trust me, Miss," and the gate closed after him with a bang.

The girl ran to her own room, and flinging herself on her couch, fell to trembling violently for a few moments, which went to show that her nerves had been strained to a high pitch by her conversation with Uri. She had been so near failing in her object that her sudden success had shaken her more than she was wont to be moved. Gradually she became composed, and a dreamy smile passed over her face as she pictured to herself the satisfaction with which her adored one would walk from his prison room, and breathe the purer air of her pleasant retreat. But what if she should lose him

through her thoughtlessness? What if he should form the idea of escaping as soon as he had been allowed the freedom of the upper part of the house. She sprang up, startled at the thought, but a quiet, reassured smile gradually stole over her face.

"He is a gentleman," she thought, "and if I get his word that he will not attempt to escape, I know he will keep it. Then, after a time, perhaps, he will go and take me with him. What do I care for the rest, when I have him. He shall be all to me, and for him alone will I live."

She had a strong desire to go at once to pass a few moments at the door of her lover's prison, but she restrained her impatience. She was woman enough to know that he would think more of her for being left to himself for a time. She knew he would think of her while she was away from him, and a tender smile came to her dark face as she imagined how she was filling his thoughts at that very moment.

So she kept away from him until it was time to take him his next repast, Uri having not yet returned, although the evening was growing late. Then she appeared at the opening with

a face as calm as if nothing had ever transpired between them, while her heart was thumping against her breast so fiercely that she almost feared he would hear it.

He noticed at once the altered look on her face, and did not speak, thinking that she had changed her mind in regard to her feelings toward him, and had resolved that the cost was too great.

She handed in the plate and jug, as usual, looked at him a moment and closed the slide. The sound of her soft footsteps down the passage seemed to fall upon his heart. She either loved him not, or had been satisfied to take some other. In spite of his determination to forego the love offered him, either the disappointment or else the blow to his self-esteem, made him the most miserable of men, and he flung himself upon the stool, buried his face in his hands and gave himself up to gloomy thoughts. What a miserable lonesome time he would have now, in that gloomy hole. Still, why was it not all for the best? She had tempted him with her passionate ways and clinging arms, and he had nearly fallen into the abyss. He took no small degree of satis-

faction to himself, over the thought that he had advised her to have none of him, and to give up all thought of love, where he was concerned. Yet there was a bitterness withal. A feeling as if something had gone from his life, something lost. She might have been his, and now she was lost to him, perhaps for others.

On such thoughts the time passed until the shadows of evening began to fall outside, and his almost dungeon was shrouded in gloom. He had composed himself, and was trying to study on some plan for escape, when he heard a rustling, and a light footfall in the hallway; the slide opened, and the light from a candle flared in through the opening.

"Henry," murmured a voice.

There was no need to tell him more. There was a wealth of concentrated passion in the tone, and he felt it thrill him. Why did she hold such an influence over him?

"What—you again?" he said.

"Well, and why not?" she asked, with a murmuring laugh of deepest pleasure. "You are my prisoner, and I come to you when I wish, for though you be my captive, I am as

much your slave. I came to exact a promise from you."

"What is it?" he asked, with a sigh. He felt the demon creeping through his veins again at sight of her.

"Your word, as a gentleman, that if I let you leave this room with me, you will not attempt an escape?"

"I prefer to remain here," he answered, sulkily.

"Now you are cross. You know you do not. Come, promise me."

"I repeat that I do not wish to leave here."

"Now you are unkind. Come closer."

He drew near her, reluctantly, like a spoiled child, using—had he only known it—the very means to fill this strange girl with only a deeper passion.

"I can only get one arm through this small opening, holding the candle as I must, so I must coax you with one arm."

She drew his face to hers and kissed him passionately. The touch thrilled her until she could keep from him no longer.

"Hold the candle," she said, shortly, passing it in to him.

There was the noise of a key turning in the lock, the door swung in, the girl gliding in at the opening, pausing ere she closed the door. She formed a picture seldom seen. Her left hand grasped the door's edge as she had pushed it open, the right being drawn behind her, in which she clasped the huge key. Her head was thrown back as she looked up at him, and one foot was thrown forward ready for the step that would bring her past the swing of the door. The light of the candle shed itself softly over her flushed face and its shadow outlined her perfect limb and hip, which the clinging garment she wore hardly served to more than conceal. The fair round arms were bare, and the light glimmered and glinted on a neck and bust that were perfect in curve and fullness.

Her hair had been loosened from its confinement, and now hung behind her far below her knees, not in a thick mass, but in a fleecy fineness, the draft coming in through the door blowing it fitfully about her hip and down the limb, the candle light seeming to burnish its raven blackness.

"Here is the door—open as you see," she

said in a suppressed voice. "I alone am in the way. You have but to strike me down, and yonder lies the open road, and freedom."

"Never, my God! never," cried he, in a passionate voice. "I may covet freedom, but not in that way. Never could I harm such sweet flesh."

She smiled a little at her triumph. She felt that he was hers, yet she resolved to try him to the utmost, to play with him as the kitten does with its first mouse. She longed to throw herself into his arms, to twine herself about him, and feel his hot kisses upon her lips, her arms, her neck, yet she felt a certain pleasure in the game she was playing.

"You hurt me as much by your refusal to grant my request," she said, sorrowfully. "Why can you not give me your word not to take advantage of the liberty I give you? You will be so much happier. Can you not look from my windows out upon the broad country, and see the river in the distance where it winds toward the blue sea? Then you will have me for company, who will never tire of trying to please you while you are with me. Come, love, we are wasting these precious

hours while the night draws on. Hours that were made for love, and us."

She saw that he was wavering, that his resolution was fast losing itself in the intoxication of her presence, and she glided to him and passed her arm about him, lifting her cheek and bending his face down to hers.

"Come—I await your answer."

"Witch that you are," he said, passionately, passing his disengaged arm about her and pressing her to him with a force which might have hurt another, yet only brought forth from her a gasp of delight, "I promise, not to escape by means of any act of yours. Does that satisfy?"

"'Tis all I ask. Now come."

He hesitated for a moment and she felt his resistance, which she removed by a passionate caress. He glanced about the room like one in a dream, lifted the candle above his head to light the way and followed the passionate woman who clasped his hand in her hot palm and drew him from his prison, closing the door behind them, then gliding softly towards the front of the house she drew him toward her own door, which stood slightly ajar. Here she

paused for just an instant, glanced at him while a glow of color swept over her face, saw the feverish light in his eyes, and then pushed open the door and drew him in. A wave of light from a bright candelabra dazzled him for an instant, then, as his eyes became accustomed to the light, he looked about him, and had he been less filled with his passion, he would have noticed that it was wonderfully elegant for the house in which it was situated.

The room was comfortably large, and contained two windows that were now draped with heavy curtains, deep fringe hanging from the lambrequins over them. In the inside wall was built a large fireplace, in which the lazy flame from a huge stick of wood mounted fitfully toward the chimney, giving just sufficient heat to make the room comfortable in the damp night. The candelabra stood on the broad mantel above, in which five candles gave quite a lustre to the furnishing of the room, which was filled with a thousand and one little pieces of fancy work that only a woman's hand could have completed. The carpet was soft and the chairs inviting. A long couch was pushed against the wall at one side

of the fireplace, at the other, half parted curtains showed into the alcove, in which could be seen the snowy coverings of a bed, and, above all, came that subtile perfume that clings about the abode of a pretty woman.

Jessaline shut the door carefully after her, pushed him quietly into an easy chair—her own favorite—which she wheeled up to the fire, sank on her knees at his side, and flinging her arms about him, rested her face upon his bosom, where she could feel the fierce beating of his heart bounding in unison with her own.

“Now, love,” she whispered, “drive away all thoughts of care and live in the present. This room is my very own, and yours; so all is mine, for mine you are, too. Here are all the comforts of life, and if you weary I will sing to you, songs of love I learned from my Spanish mother. Is not this more sweet than being separated by that cruel door? Now I can fold you in my arms, and feel your heart beat against my breast. Tell me you love me.”

He pressed her close to him and kissed her passionately on lips, neck and bosom. “I love you, sweet. Love you in spite of myself, for

you are the most enticing woman alive. God help me! Where will this end?"

She laughed a low laugh of pleasure as she threw herself upon his knee and drew his head down till it rested on her panting breast.

"You are mine alone! Mine at last! When I first saw you, in the opening of the door, I knew hardly what I felt, except that my whole being went out to you of its own accord. I longed to have you near me. I tossed restlessly in my bed that night and dreamed of you. My soul seemed to fill with new life as a new feeling, some new desire took possession of me. Oh! love, teach me what it is that draws me to you. Teach me the tale my own heart is striving to tell me, as it beats madly within my breast."

She paused to lavish her caresses upon him with all the abandon of an impassioned woman, caring for nothing but the fulfillment of her own destiny as governed by her own desires.

"It is no longer a temptation with me, dear one," said he, laughing recklessly, "for should you now draw back, it is I who would be the tempter. Oh! sweetest of sweet ones, the pas-

sion you have awakened is greater than your own."

"Tempt me then," she whispered, mockingly, her eyes swimming and her breath reaching his cheek in a warm, perfumed wave, "*tempt me NOW!*"

For answer he spoke not, but, bending down, raised her in his arms, up from her seat. Her arms clung tightly about his neck. He took one step—"There is yet time," he whispered, for he could hardly speak. "Tell me '*no*'—"

"I tell you—yes—for love's sake," she breathed, her arms tightening; then her eyes closed as a thrill went through the perfect form he held in his arms. A moment later, the room was alone, and only the lazily waving curtains, as they swung back to place, their velvety surface presenting an ever varying hue in the last ray of the setting sun, was left to tell the tale of a great temptation, and a great fall.

Alas! Poor Ruth!

CHAPTER XII.

A DREARY OUTLOOK.

Life at the plantation resumed its weary way after the capture of Henry, and the escape of Walter, a portentous silence seeming to be over all. Ruth went about with a pale face, busied with her daily duties, and Eloise appeared to droop visibly, yet found time to cheer her companion. It was one virtue of her disposition, that no matter how sorrow might blight her, it made her ever the more ready to sympathize with others in their afflictions; so much so that Ruth learned gradually to lean on her, morally speaking. Henry was of course, the bond between them—though Ruth knew it not—which made it the easier to cheer her, even when her own heart was near breaking with the effort.

As for Roger, he felt little aside from indignation at the events connected with the capture, and prevailed upon Joshua to remain with him, off and on, in order that this indig-

nation might find vent in gloomy invectives against the British, and predictions for their complete overthrow in the end; for no matter how his distant neighbors might croak at events, the staunch loyalty to the cause, evinced by the old colonist, never wavered for an instant. Strange to say, he felt little fear for the safety of his son. He had a presentiment, which is ever strong in elderly people, that the young fellow was coming out of the struggle safely, and he trusted to that feeling. He was probably a little nervous as to what would happen Henry, on Ruth's account, but never feared to have a cheering word for her in her sore trouble.

There was unusual vigilance among the negroes, who were ever on the alert for spies, or news of the young men. It was astonishing in those days, the amount of news that was picked up by these dark people, and the rapidity with which it was transmitted to distances, that in those days seemed great, was often quite astonishing to the men of war.

Some time elapsed, and the daily life of the household had settled again into its regulation smoothness, but little news coming from the

wars with the exception of an occasional report of a battle in the north. These reports were not always the most reliable, and Roger would fume and fret over a defeat, that would be sometimes turned into a victory by later reports.

One evening a few weeks after the stirring events that had occurred to them, Roger and Joshua were seated in the shade of the vines on the veranda, while Ruth and Eloise were enjoying the shelter of a huge sycamore, at the edge of the lawn, the former engaged in some needlework, while Eloise read from a book that lay in her lap.

"Are you not tired of reading, dear?" asked Ruth, interrupting her at the close of a passage.

"I? Oh, no, cousin," raising the sweet face, in which were a pair of sad eyes, so unlike those of the bright young girl she had been, "it seems to rest me."

"Put by the book for a time, and let us talk of—"

"Of what, dear?"

"Of Henry."

Eloise turned her head away for an instant

to conceal the look of pain that came over her face. It had been some little time since the subject had been mentioned between them, and the old pain came back to her. Would she never forget—never get to think of him without that pang at her heart? She had to make an effort to repress a weary sigh as she answered:

“Well, Ruth, and what now?”

“Don’t be vexed with me, dear. If your heart was filled with him, as mine is, you would not wonder that I wished to talk of him.”

Eloise smiled a little weary smile. How little Ruth knew about the thoughts of her heart. *If her heart was filled with him.* She almost felt like breaking into a wild laugh at the thought. *If*, when her heart was nearly breaking with the anxiety she felt for his sake.

“It has been some time now, since his capture,” continued Ruth, “and we have neither heard from him, or Walter. It is almost certain that he could not have escaped, and probably he is in close confinement in a Charleston prison.”

The tears sprang to her eyes at the thought,

and she brushed them away with her handkerchief. Ruth seldom wept, but of late she had become more than unusually nervous, and less mistress of herself.

“He is a soldier,” said Eloise, raising her head, proudly, “and will not shrink from the consequences. He is fighting for his country and our homes, and will bear up bravely; so why should we be less brave? Look matters in the face, and trust to Him above for the result.”

“I fear I am weak, dear; but you must remember that I have been torn from my husband’s arms, with the wedding blessing little more than pronounced, and he must be in misery. Think how he must mourn for liberty, and for me, his wife.”

“Have patience, and hope; for life is little in these troubled times without them both. Try and remember too, that Walter has escaped, and will never desert his friend. They are firmly attached to each other, and my brother will leave no stone unturned to rescue him. You know his great strength, the most powerful young man, they say, in the colonies, and nothing can withstand him.”

The girl grew animated in spite of her sorrow, and her eyes flashed with pride as she thought of the brother, that had been the hero of her youth, as Henry had been its love.

"You do reassure me," said Ruth, more hopefully than she had yet spoken, "and I will try and look at our sorrows with your hopeful eyes."

"There's father laughing now," said Eloise, as the old man's voice was heard in answer to a sally from his aged ministerial friend. "I wish we could all believe as he does. He thinks that nothing can happen to our boys."

She arose as she spoke, shutting her book and gliding toward the veranda. Ruth resumed her work, with thoughts far away with the absent one. Why did he not return, or else send her some word? When would her heart be set at rest? One word, one little written line would be sufficient.

Roger greeted his daughter in his old fond way, and drew her to the arm of the huge chair that was his favorite, and in which he passed the most of his time.

"My little girl does not look well. What think you, friend Bell?" he said, pinching her

cheek, playfully, that the color might come to them for an instant, as of old.

"Rather pale, I admit," answered Joshua, "but it is pale times. Apprehension drives the blood back from the cheeks of every true son of our country, for the crisis approaches."

"Aye! that it does," cried Roger, his eye kindling, and his martial spirit getting the better of him. "A crisis, too, that I see with a prophetic eye. I see the red-coats fleeing from before our righteous arms, and the cross of St. George lowered before conquering arms of the child of England. Then, for the last time, will the cannon peal forth, not in battle, but rejoicing at the Heaven sent victory. Woe, woe to the king of Britain and his hosts!"

Hardly had he finished his impassioned words, when the breeze that rustled the leaves of the trees overhead, brought with it the faint rumble of an approaching storm.

"Listen!" said Roger, rising, excitedly, his trained ear catching the sound, his eye sparkling.

Boom-m-m—

There was no mistaking it now.

"A distant battle," said Roger. "Now may

all the powers for good be with our cause in this, and spare our loved ones!"

"Amen!" said Joshua, fervently, "and God be with our troops. May they wield the sword of might, and smite the red-coats hip and thigh. May their every bullet have its billet, and may they prevail in their attacks."

"Is it a very great battle?" asked Eloise, trembling slightly, and passing her arm about the waist of Ruth, who had joined them upon hearing the sounds.

"I hardly know," answered her father. "If the distance is great, and the guns large, it is a heavy struggle; but they may be but light field-pieces and the battle but a skirmish among some of the scouting parties. We will learn soon, be that as it may, for Sam is out on the Charleston road and will bring us such news as is going about, when he returns."

The battle, whether great or small, appeared to be a lively one, for the freshening breeze, as it came in stronger gusts than before, brought the faint echo of the rattle of musketry, mingled with the occasional boom of a greater gun, at each sound of which the girls would start, as if they expected that in the sound

was the fear of danger to a dear one. The sounds lasted for fully a half hour, and then died away altogether, leaving the listeners in as much doubt as ever as to the extent of the engagement.

The circumstance turned the talk upon the war, a subject in which the old gentlemen grew quite animated and eloquent, while the girls seated themselves near by and listened, intently. The talk had a fascination for them, even though they almost dreaded to hear it, for it often turned upon how this or that friend or neighbor had laid down his life for his country in doing some brave action. They had talked for some time, when the sound of many hoofs in the distance, caused them to listen.

"They appear to be drawing nearer," ventured Roger.

"They are fugitives, I'll be bound, from the engagement. Now we may know who has prevailed," said Joshua.

"You are right, and they approach rapidly. Soon they will be near, unless they take the other road. By their coming this way, they must be red-coats, for our men would hardly

take the route to Charleston. Ah! right it is. See!" exclaimed he, as the head horseman appeared in sight, "'tis the British, in full flight. Huzza!"

"Quiet, friend Roger," said the cautious divine. "Vex them not."

"They have little time to tend to ought but their own safety," laughed the old gentleman. "They are in over-haste about that."

The cavalcade dashed by in headlong haste, as if in fear of pursuit. As they passed, one of the party slackened up a moment, and turned to look back into the edge of the wood from which the road opened.

"The young fellow's down," he hallooed to the rest of the party.

"Let him go; he's done for," came back the hoarse reply, and the humane one gave a last look, turned his horse and galloped after them in mad haste.

"One of them must have come to grief back there," muttered Joshua. "Had we not better look after him?"

"It were better if they minded their own affairs," grumbled Roger, "yet we must see to him, I fear, out of humanity. I'll send one of

the hands down that way. Whoever it is, he is probably dead ere this, or his companions would hardly have left him. Here, you Jim," he called to a grinning black, who was at work near by. "Run up the road and see if you find a red-coat lying in the road."

The young ladies had watched the events with pale faces, their arms about each other, each feeling saddened over the fate of a human being, even though he were an enemy. The party watched Jim as he leisurely crossed the grass, toward the road. The sun was low in the Heavens, and threw its light between the trees on to the bright grass, which sloped gently down to the high bushes that lined the road, and served as a hedge. At one spot in the lane the sun's rays gave the leaves an unusual brilliancy, while the rest of the line of verdure was thrown into deep shadow by the long guant shadows of the tree tops.

While the whole party were watching Jim as he neared this spot, the branches suddenly parted, and a man staggered through, his coat off, and the white of his shirt dyed with the crimson stream that flowed from a gash in his head. He stood there a moment, his

arms apart, holding back the slight branches, and the sun lit up his pale face, and glistened on the bright red gash in the head. He gazed fixedly upon the group on the veranda for an instant, then he reeled, and, with a little cry, sank prone upon the grass. At the same time Jim, the darkey, threw his arms above his head and rushed forward, exclaiming:

“Oh, my Lo’d!” he cried, “Massa Henry.”

“Good God! I thought so,” cried Roger, and he turned to Ruth, who had fainted in the arms of Eloise.



CHAPTER XIII.

FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH.

The two old gentlemen hurried down toward the road, where Jim, the black, was down on his knees, bending over the silent figure and uttering those peculiar wails, that never come from any but the African race, with such a portentous sentiment.

“Run up to the cabins at once,” said Roger, when they drew near, “and send down a couple of the boys to help us. Then mount the fastest horse in the stable, and go to the village for the surgeon. Quick now—there is no time to be lost.”

Jim bounded away on his errand, only pausing to give one last groan, before he left.

“I would send to Charleston itself, were there any need, in spite of the foe,” said Roger, “but that I feel that Dr. Mitchell is the most practical man of all, in cases of this kind.”

“Aye!” said Joshua, “and far more learned in surgery than the whole tribe together at the

city. Gently, now, Roger," he cautioned, as they raised the form of the young man from the ground, "all sudden shocks must be avoided, so walk slowly."

"Poor young man," said Roger, tenderly. "I hardly expected this fate for him. How came he by these equipments, think you?"

"Do not ask," said the minister, "he will tell soon enough of his own accord, when he regains his senses."

Roger, however, was only half appeased, and he had in fact been the only one during the excitement, to notice that the coatless young man was undoubtedly attired in the nether dress of an officer in the British horse. He shook his head doubtfully, as if puzzled to account for it, and with a determination which showed that he would require a thorough explanation before he was satisfied.

They carried him into the house, and up to the room that was always kept ready for Walter, in case he should come unexpectedly. Ruth and Eloise had recovered their presence of mind sufficiently to assist in taking care of him, and his clotted shirt was removed, the blood washed from his white face and every-

thing made as comfortable as tender care and loving hands could make it. Then came the long wait for the physician, that seemed interminable. How long these hours seem, when we sit by the bedside of one we love, and count the minutes, while the dear one lies so still near us; only a slight sighing breath, once in a while, to tell that the soul has not passed from the still body, and left us naught but clay.

The two girls sat by his side in silence, and when they did speak it was hardly above a whisper. The two old gentlemen sat near the window, watching eagerly for the return of Jim, with the man of medicine. The silence was oppressive, and once in a while the injured man's breath would catch for an instant, and the two girls would turn pale with fear, lest the effort to fill the lungs would be the last. Once Ruth bent to press a soft kiss upon the unconscious cheek, and Eloise buried her face in her hands. Oh! why was fate so cruel, that she dared not caress him?—the man she felt, with a pang, she still loved.

“He is changed,” said Ruth in a whisper, “sadly changed since they tore him from me on our wedding day. See how much thinner

the poor face is, and how pale the neck. His hands, even, seem to have grown small and slender. He seems so different from when he stood before me that day, and vowed to love and cherish me as his bride."

"Confinement and privation will do much to change spirits that have been free as air, like Walter and—your husband," answered Eloise, softly. "He is even handsomer than before, in his trouble."

And, indeed, such appeared to be the case. The dark hair had been washed free from the blood, except at the wound, and fell about the pale temples in slender curls. Its length when it hung down the neck, as was the fashion of the period, allowing a few wavy locks to lie over the shoulder. The eyes were closed, but that only served to show the length of the dark lashes that lay over the cheek. The lips, thinner than usual, seemed almost transparent from the loss of blood, while the pale cheek showed the shadow of a prominent cheek-bone. The ears seemed to have thinned perceptibly and lie closer to the head.

"Oh! Henry, my love, how they have changed you," sighed Ruth, the silent tears

breaking forth and coursing down her cheeks.

"How they must have forced you to suffer."

"Hush! Ruth," whispered Eloise, laying one cold and trembling hand upon her arm, "we should be thankful that it is into our keeping that Providence has assigned him in his hour of need. He might have been left to perish in the dark wood, with no one near him to give him a tender care."

"True, dear, but even now, he may never again speak to us. We may never hear his voice. What if he should die thus, sinking gradually into a death-like torpor. Oh! cousin, can nothing be done? Why does not the doctor arrive?"

"Patience," said Eloise.

"The doctor at last," said Roger, from the window, with a sigh of relief.

"And riding like mad," finished Mr. Bell.

"Thank God!" said Ruth, rising and going to the window, so eager was she, and she could hardly contain herself while he drew up to the door, where he was met by Roger, who gave his horse in charge to Jim and went with him at once to the sick chamber.

Dr. Mitchell was a little sandy Scot, with a

bright steel-gray eye, and a sprightliness of manner that never failed to brighten up the anxious ones whenever he appeared in a sick room.

“Now what have we here?” he asked, wiping the dust from his eyes with a huge snuff colored pocket handkerchief. “Ha! young men and the wars are sore company when they gang together.”

The surgeon, it will be observed, was careful of his accent, but once in a while, under pressure, mental or physical, he would occasionally use a Scotch word.

“Now, let us see,” he continued, putting on his spectacles, and touching the hair about the wound with his large hand more tenderly than a woman. “I will require a bowl of soft water, that is all, I believe, and I would advise the ladies to retire, for a little—a very slight, I assure you—operation must be undergone, and Mr. Fuller, and my reverend friend will do very well to assist me.”

“But, doctor—” interrupted both girls, in a breath.

“No buts, at all, my dears, but go down

stairs, and I will promise to call you in a short time. Now do gang awa."

"Is there any danger, doctor?" asked Eloise as they are about to go, an anxious light in her eye, and a deeper paleness overspreading her face to the very neck, as she saw the shiny instruments in the bag.

"Not at present, little one, I promise you," he answered, "the danger, if any, will come later on."

Satisfied with this, the girl followed Ruth down the stairs, and out again upon the veranda, where the coolness of an approaching twilight began to be felt. A portentous dread seemed to fill the atmosphere for these two young people, whose hearts appeared to be bound up in the young man who lay up stairs, apparently dying, if not already all but dead.

In the sick room, the surgeon went about his work with a celerity that proved not only his familiarity with the work at hand, but also showed that some haste was necessary in its completion.

"Now, we are all men," he said, briskly, as he sponged the wound, softly, "and can work without any interference. Not that I don't

appreciate the women in the sick room, bless them, they are as valuable and as necessary as angels are to Heaven, but they are weak and uncanny about wounds and surgical operations. Its their soft hearts, you know."

The young man never moved during the preliminaries; in fact, he seemed to have gradually settled into a deeper lethargy than before, his breathing being hardly audible. The two old gentlemen watched anxiously, feeling little doubt that the end was near.

"This is a very common result of war," said Dr. Mitchell, talking rapidly. "The skull has been crushed by a blow from some rather blunt instrument, and a small piece presses against the brain. If I can relieve that, his recovery to physical health is certain. Now, Mr. Fuller, I will trouble you to hold the head firmly, and toward the light, this way. I know that your nerve is like iron, for I have tried it before. My reverend friend can hold the bowl, should I require it. Now, sir, steady."

The bright instruments began their work swiftly and silently. Roger held the head not

softly, yet as firm as in a vise, and there was a tremble nor a quiver. The patient never stirred from his torpor, except once, when the doctor gave a little sigh of satisfaction, extracted a small piece of bone, and laid down his instruments. The young man had trembled slightly and a stronger breath seemed to struggle through his almost closed lips.

The wound was then carefully treated and bandaged, and when the ladies were allowed to enter, the pale patient was undoubtedly much improved, as was evident from a more regular and stronger respiration.

"Oh! doctor, you have saved him," said Ruth, taking his hand and pressing it in thankfulness.

"Not I, my dear, for, now that the wound is relieved, it is you who must bring back the life to the body and brain. The young fellow was cruelly hurt, and he will be ill probably for some time. I fear a brain fever, and, as he has lost much blood, the care must be all the more thorough. I will leave you strong cordials for him and medicine to allay the fever."

"But what if he should grow worse?"

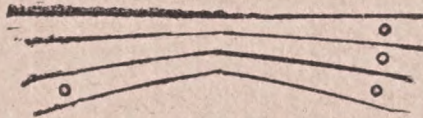
asked Ruth, and the appealing eyes of Eloise echoed the question.

“Well, young ladies, to please you, I will consent to stay the night, if your father will agree to give me a bed, and send me off with a *doch in doris* in the morning.”

Roger promised, and the physician was amply repaid with a glance from two pairs of lovely eyes. The young ladies agreed to watch by the bedside that night with Luce, the cook, on a couch in the next room ready for an emergency, and the doctor not far off, sleeping, as doctors do, with one eye open, and the other but little more than closed.

All night the two women watched over the loved though silent form. Ruth tried to have Eloise go to her rest, but the girl insisted upon remaining, supposedly to keep her cousin company, but in reality that she might be near to hear the slightest need. Silently the hours passed away, broken only by the irregular breathing of the patient, who seemed gradually to grow stronger, and still the two silent figures sat by the bedside, until the morning light began to steal in through the window,

and the morning songs of the glad birds told of the awakening day. Then the doctor relieved them, and sent them off to bed with the assurance that the patient was much better.



CHAPTER XIV.

“I DO NOT KNOW YOU!”

The fear that had been felt by Dr. Mitchell over the condition of his patient, appeared to be only too well founded, for though on the following day more visible signs of returning life became apparent, a fever began to show itself, which attacked the brain and proved unusually obstinate. However, after many weary days and nights of watching, with hope often almost fled, the danger point was passed, and the patient rested peacefully, though so weak that it seemed as if his every breath was an exertion almost too great for the weary body to endure.

Strange to say, during all the fever, even when at its height, the young man made no mention of the events that had transpired during his captivity. Nor, in fact, did he utter anything that was intelligible. He muttered, at times, for hours together, but nothing could be understood, though his nurses listened

breathlessly for a few words that would tell them of the events that lead up to his injury. Not a word could be made out, and never once in his delirium did he utter the names of either of his friends, nor yet that of his young bride, who seemed to listen more eagerly than the rest of them for a whisper of her name, to show that she was not forgotten, even in the derangement of his brain.

As for Eloise, she assisted as best she could in the cares of the sick room, her patient face showing little trace of the deep heart-sorrow that was her secret misery. She would be to him all that she could while he was out of his head, when he could not surprise her secret at some unguarded moment. When he came to himself, she would keep more in the background, and begin anew the task of learning to forget him, in the light he had always appeared to her. Sometimes, as she watched by his side, during the long afternoon hours, a great wave of feeling would come over her at sight of his utter helplessness and her own duty, which forbade her from pressing her lips to the white brow—as she was often tempted to do—in a mute caress.

But all things must have an ending some time, and gradually the sick man grew stronger, so much so that his physician was of the opinion that by the next day he should be able to speak for himself; for there was every evidence of the struggle of mind over matter that showed itself in various nervous turnings of the head, and an attempt for an instant, at times, to open the eyes, and look about. Attempts which, so far, had resulted only in their being closed again, while a weary sigh escaped from the breast of the sick man.

So for the next day, some of the old hands from Delside, were asked over to the house. The old nurse who had tended him, while an infant; the black, who had first taught him to mount a pony, and all the familiar faces from his own home, that now was left to the care of his servants, until he should bring a mistress there to take command.

“All these preparations may be surperfluous,” said Dr. Mitchell, in explanation, “yet there should be every effort made to meet the returning spark of reason by a few reminders of his past life. The faces gathered together

here will cause the past to come before him with vivid distinctness, and in that way we will save the mind, as we have saved the body. There, there ! now," he continued, as Eloise began to show evidence of tears, "don't borrow trouble, for I expect him to come out of it, bright as a trivitt and as healthy as a fish."

"Oh ! doctor !" said Ruth, appealingly, while Roger linked his arm in that of his daughter, and lead her away to his old seat on the veranda down stairs, "you do not fear for his reason, do you ? He will not be—be—lacking, mentally ?"

"My dear young lady," said the kind Scotchman, after a moment's thought. "I will not deceive you in the least in this matter. Your husband will return to perfect health, but I do fear that it may be some time before his brain is strong again. Now, do not put on that thoroughly awful expression. There will not, I think, be anything uncanny about the boy. His brain will be a little weak, and must not be taxed too hard at first, but there will be nothing that time will not efface, and as the nervous system becomes stronger, the brain will assume its normal condition the

more rapidly, and soon he will be as well as ever.

“Will that take long?”

“It will depend entirely upon circumstances, and it may be that I am borrowing trouble. The young man’s brain has been subjected to great abuse, but it may be that he will show little signs of the fact. Be brave, and wait.”

“Ah, but, doctor, you must see that this may place me in a fearfully uncomfortable position. I am his wife, and should he fail to remember me at once, how every one will almost pity me. They will look upon me in the same manner, as though I had been unable to hold my husband’s love.”

“My dear young lady, you put it in altogether a wrong light. No one will imagine, for a moment, any such construction. You are over-sensitive, and I will feel compelled to scold you for such feelings, if you insist upon allowing them to dwell in your mind for an instant. Now put on your sweetest face, for here come some of the people that we have sent for.”

“Bear with me, kind friend,” she said, brush-

ing away a silent tear, that sparkled on her dark lashes, "and I will do as you say."

She stepped to the door as the visitors approached. Roger and his daughter preceded them, and then followed the people from Henry's plantation. There was Aunt Kitty, as fat and as round as a pumpkin, half again as heavy as when she tossed the baby Henry in her arms. Then came Cæsar, the powerful stable man who was still, in his old age, better able to break a fractious colt than many another, and these were followed by three more of his people with whom he should be the most familiar.

"Clar to goodness, Massa Doctah Mitch'l," said the old nurse, tipping her massive body from side to side, as she made her way to the side of the sick man, "wha' foh yo' try foh to do to de po' boy? De sojers hab done gone did foh him shuah."

"Not quite, aunty," said Roger, good-naturedly, "there is plenty of life, aye, and plenty of fight left in him yet."

Cæsar and the rest of the party from Delside stood on one side of the bed, gazing for the first time since his injury, upon their young

master, who lay there pale and still, but yet breathing regularly, and more lifelike than at any previous time. Aunt Kitty, her arms akimbo and her head thrown back, gazed at him long and silently. He was so changed as to actually startle her into silence. She looked at him fixedly and in a puzzled manner, then she pulled Cæsar by the sleeve, and whispered in his ear.

“Look hyah, Cæсах,” she said, “dat am Massa Henry, shuah 'nough, am it?”

“Shuah, honey. Dey am no doubt 'bout dat. Lo'd lub him, I done know de boy like my own chile, an' he was de brave one, jes' like his fathah.”

“Doan yo' 'membah bout how I used to tell you bout how I feah'd foh dat boy ob mine, cause he hab a mole undah his lef' eah?”

“'Deed I do,” and Cæsar's eyes began to open a little wider, for the colored race is, and was ever influenced by mystery and superstition.

“Now look hyah, Cæсах. Yoah eyes is fah bettah to see dan mine. Look undah de lef' eah, now honey, foh me, jes' whar de big cu'l

ob ha'h (hair) lies back on de pillow. Do—do yo' see dat mole dar, Cæsah?"

"No, I doan, honey," said Cæsar, in a scared whisper. "It am gone foh shuah. Maybe yo' is mistaken bout de side."

"No, I isn't. Dey's somethin' bad ole man. De debbil hab done gone put his cloben hoofs 'bout dis brisiness, yo' heah me, chile!"

The two old black people looked at each other in a scared way, and drew closer together as a supernatural fear crept over them. They, with the others of their race, believed almost in a personification of the evil one, who went about at all times and seasons meddling in other people's affairs, and doing such mischief as he saw fit. One of the old superstitions was that a mole of any proportions, if situated under the left ear, was a mark of the evil one, for some purpose or other, and that it was now gone from their master was, to them, a sure sign that the prince of darkness had been present and taken back his sign. Little time was left them for speculation, however, for the doctor stepped to the little side table and carefully mixed a drug in a wine glass. Into this he dropped two tiny drops

from a small vial, and, filling a spoon with the mixture, stepped to the bedside.

“All stand where he can see you at once, when he opens his eyes,” said he, pausing for a moment.

They arranged themselves so as to be in a direct line with the patient's line of vision, and waited with beating hearts, while the doctor forced open the young man's teeth and poured the contents of the spoon over his tongue. For a moment the mixture was retained there, then the throat moved as it was swallowed, seemingly with great difficulty. The drug must have been powerful, for the effect was noticed in a few moments. He turned over on his back, and moved his arms restlessly, drawing them from under the coverings, and throwing them over his breast, where the poor white fingers seemed almost transparent.

His breath came in longer gasps, and his chest rose and fell as if a mighty force was behind it, then a heavy sigh trembled from his lips. There were a few convulsive contractions of the muscles of the forehead, the brows twitched, the eyelids quivered, the lashes

raised themselves from the cheeks once, twice, and then the eyes opened themselves to the subdued light of the room. At first the light seemed to effect them, and it was a few moments before they fixed themselves upon any object. Then they slowly moved about from one to the other of the faces about him. He looked at Ruth a moment, then his gaze rested upon the face of Eloise, and dwelt there for a moment intently, while a deep flush mantled her face, and her small hand, that lay upon her father's arm, trembled slightly. He looked at everyone in turn, then back again to Eloise.

"The eye is clear," whispered the doctor to Roger, gleefully rubbing his hands. "The brain is safe, for there is not the least trace of mental derangement.

"Wait," whispered back Roger, nervously.

The lips of the patient seemed to struggle in an effort to speak, but the words were not intelligible.

"Speak to him, Aunt Kitty," said Mitchell, quickly.

"Bress de Lo'd! yo' is back again to us all, Massa Henry," said the old nurse, with a sob.

Ruth, unable to contain herself longer, fell

on her knees by the bedside and, clasping her hands, sobbed, convulsively.

"Compose yourself, my dear," said the doctor, "all depends upon our actions."

"Oh! Henry," she cried, "my husband, that they have tried to tear from me, speak to us, and let us know that we indeed have you with us once more."

The sick man fastened a look of surprise upon her; his lips moved, feebly at first, then more strong, and the words came like a long, dreary sigh:

"I-do-not-know-you!"

There was an awful silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of the sick man, then Ruth, with an agonized cry, fell to the floor in a swoon. The strain had been too great.

CHAPTER XV.

A LIVING LIE.

Two days had passed. Two long weary days, in which the young man in the silent room up stairs, grew rapidly stronger, so rapidly, in fact, that it was certain little over a week would pass before he might be able to leave his bed and venture out, even on to the veranda, beneath the spreading branches, when the days should be pleasant. He spoke very little during his convalescence, calling only for what he required at intervals, and then rather hesitatingly, as if not quite sure of his words, a state of things which seemed almost pitiful. That a strong man should lie weak and helpless was bad enough, but that he should be forced to struggle for his words, like the veriest infant, was enough to bring tears to the eyes of those who loved him.

After the startling announcement at his recovery, in which, in which it was shown that he did not remember one of them, and as

he was well enough to be practically out of danger, he was left to the charge of Aunt Kittie and Cæsar, who took the best of care of him, their kind old hearts almost filled with tears at his attempts at conversation. The two were even now sitting in the window-seat at the open window, while Roger and Dr. Mitchell conversed in low tones, enjoying the smoking of their long pipes the while. Ruth and Eloise were seated beneath their favorite tree, glancing, now and then toward the upper window, as if their talk was upon the subject nearest their hearts.

“You were saying—” ventured Roger, seeking to resume a conversation that had been interrupted by a call from Henry to his nurses, “that it were better to keep him in ignorance of everything. The result of his wound has been very peculiar, for while it appears to have left him perfectly rational, memory has gone completely. He can speak only from force of habit, so strong that the words almost frame themselves.”

“Is it possible to forget speech?”

“Certainly. Everything requires constant practice in order to retain it fully in the mem-

ory. A man in solitary confinement for many years, who hears no words spoken during all the time, will eventually forget language. With our young friend, it has followed the loss of memory, that his utterance is halting, and it will take some little time for him to regain his former freedom of speech. In the meantime, memory may be brought to him by a sudden shock, some great happiness, or the sudden return of some former feeling, that has filled his past. Do you see my drift?"

"I cannot say that I do."

"Humph! it is simple enough. In the first place, never let him know that Ruth is his wife. Tell him all the rest just as it is, for it will all be news to him, and let him have his own way in everything. Whatever has filled his heart before, will do so again, for that is still the same. He will, of course, fall in love with Ruth—there is the key to the whole mystery. Do you see now?"

"No. You are still obtuse."

"Dull—just a little dull, Mr. Fuller. Don't you see that as this love gradually fills his heart, it will open the past before him. Then there will be the repetition of his

former passion. Finally he will recognize it, and he will begin to wonder and think, until the whole past will unfold before him, as clear as an open book."

"Mitchell!" exclaimed Roger, excitedly, slapping his hand heavily upon the knee of the little doctor, to enforce the expression, "you are an angel of physic."

"Oh! you see now, do you? Well, I don't know about the angel part, for I think that Mistress Ruth will assume that character in the case at hand. Meantime, there are the ladies, and there is no time like the present in which to make all the preparations for the great *coup*."

And that was the beginning of the end. The prime cause for weeks of suffering, such as could only be felt by the deep, true and tender heart that beat in the bosom of patient, suffering Eloise, and was none the less great to the poor wife—the loving, though more fiery Ruth. Could any one have had the temerity to tell the two loving cousins that the day would ever come when they would have a serious quarrel, they would have been laughed to scorn; yet the potency of love is beyond con-

ception, and the workings of the heart when filled and swayed by jealousy, is beyond conception. The future was before them, and close about was fate weaving its meshes, and entangling all in the snarl.

The doctor's plan was followed out to the letter. Henry learned the main points, as to his identity and those about him from the two blacks, who nursed their young master with the tenderest care. Often each day, Ruth and Eloise came in to see him for a time, and talk with him, but for the latter it was a fearful effort, and one that was wearing upon her. Often his eyes would seek hers, unperceived by Ruth, and there seemed to be a light in them that caused her to pale to the roots of her hair. A vague, indefinite something that almost seemed to thrill her whole being with happiness, and then leave a dull sickening dread as of an unspoken evil, came over her, until she grew weary with the deep sense of unrest.

Ruth also had her cross to bear. Her husband was back with her, and growing in strength daily, yet she must remain as nothing to him. Wife only in name, she must wear a

mask, and meet him with little pleasantries, as if he was nothing to her. Often as she had gone to her own room, she would burst into a flood of tears, and pray that the end might come soon; that his memory might return, for she felt that she was not equal to the task of keeping up appearances for long.

Then came a slight relief. Henry was able to be about a little, and it was thought best to have him taken home to Delside where he would be under the influence of old associations. He took leave of them one day, therefore, as the whole family stood upon the veranda to see them off, and thanked them, with almost tears in his voice for their kindness to him.

"I was little else than a stranger, he said, the tears springing to the handsome dark eyes, about which the deep rings still showed, from his sickness, "and you took me, and saved my life, giving me the tenderest care. I shall never forget it, and my great care in the future shall be, to in some slight measure repay the debt I owe you."

"Pray do not speak of it, my young friend," said Roger, cordially, "for we owe you more

than that in the past, which you have forgotten."

A shadow passed over Henry's face, for he was sensitive to his infirmity of mind. He shook hands with them all, giving Ruth's fingers a friendly clasp, to which she bravely made no sign, and reserved his last touch for the hand of Eloise, which he gave a gentle pressure, accompanied by a tender look, that made her heart beat rapidly, though her face only showed a shade deeper of paleness. Then Cæsar lead him to the old lumbering country vehicle in waiting, and he waved them a feeble adieu as it rumbled up the road toward his own plantation.

For a time, the old quiet settled down upon the Fuller homestead. Little news came to them of the fortunes of the struggle for Independence, and none at all of Walter. Whether that young man was enjoying the excitements of the struggle with his customary dash; whether he was a prisoner as Henry had been, in the hands of the enemy, or whether a British bullet had laid low his powerful frame, were still matters for conjecture, though the proud old father insisted that there was no

manner of question but what his son would escape with flying colors from the battles in which he participated.

Soon, however, something happened to divert their thoughts, and brought excitement enough to at last two of the dwellers under the Fuller roof tree. It was not to be expected that Henry was to remain a convalescent for any great length of time, and, in fact, it was but a few weeks before he began to grow restless in his own home, and pine for the society of his friends. Then there was one face that haunted him every day, almost every hour. Many and many a time as he sat in silent meditation, again would arise before him a pale face with a wealth of fair hair, just as it looked when first he opened his eyes upon the world, and saw that heavenly being so near him. Of all the rest, he cared for but this, that he had seen the interest in her look, and he felt there was a bond between them that nothing could break.

Nothing? How little he knew the complication into which his heart was leading him. The brain had died, and found a new birth. Had the heart died, too? Was he to love the

fair-haired girl—who even now was suffering because of her own hopeless love—with a passion he had never felt for the girl he had wedded? Unconsciously the plan adopted by kind little Doctor Mitchell had prepared an abyss, that even now was yawning to receive the ashes of their broken lives—three bruised and shattered hearts. Where would it all end? Only time and the dim future could tell, for there was no one to warn them, no one to extend a staying hand. The end must come.

Henry began to ride over almost daily on his favorite horse, as soon as he became strong enough, and at such times, when the weather was fine, he would loll on the sward at the feet of the two girls, while they indulged in their little fancy work. Sometimes one or the other of them would read to him from their favorite books, and the days soon grew very pleasant to him, for when Ruth would read, he could look into the deep blue eyes of Eloise, and, though he saw that his look disquieted her, he felt that at heart it did not displease her.

One afternoon they were gathered thus, and Ruth was reading to them from Romeo and

Juliet. He had been listening intently the while, as the girl's face grew animated with the reading. Nor had she selected the particular subject carelessly. Perhaps such poems of passion as that one would awaken the old love in his heart. She read with exquisite sweetness and expression, and Eloise was carried away with it, to such an extent that she dropped her work, and listened intently. Suddenly their eyes met just at a thrilling passage in the tale, and, half unconsciously, the two hands came together while the reader was wrapped up in her task. Eloise blushed a deep crimson as his hand clasped hers, and then turned pale as she drew it away. She had pressed his, unconsciously, and that pressure had sent the blood leaping through his heart. In his mind she was his Juliet, his love, and she loved him. A little only, perhaps, but more, he felt, it would be in the future.

Truly Ruth was teaching him to love, but at what cross purposes were they all working. She was giving a form and a voice to the presence that had been growing in his heart, and now he knew what love was, and knew that he felt it, for the fair girl who was near him. A

sweet glow seemed to come over him at the thought, and, as Ruth finished her reading, he sighed.

“A sad end to a pretty tale,” he said, “it is not thus that I would have my love dream end—were I to have one.”

“How, then?” asked Ruth, almost trembling.

“There should be no cloud to mar my darling’s brow; nothing keener than love and whispers of constancy to break her heart. When with each other, only would the world go ’round, and when apart, the hours seem ages ’till we met again. To end the story, the maturest age should come, while each year with the other, had only added to the bliss.”

“How would you picture bliss? One would think that you had loved.”

A shadow passed over his face as he answered:

“I trust not. I should wish a love I might feel now to be my first.”

Eloise gave him a quick glance. Their eyes met and she understood.

While they spoke they did not notice a dark figure that had crept noiselessly from

tree to tree, now and then crouching in the brush to conceal itself from view, then crawling forward until it had gained a position in a clump of bushes where it could see the group without being observed. Slowly the figure raised itself until it peered from over the tops of the concealing leaves, and disclosed the dark face of Ralph Pepper. He looked with greedy eyes upon the face of the reader, and fairly rubbed his hands delight.

"You'll be mine yet, my beauty," he muttered, "wait, only wait."

Just then Henry raised upon his elbow and turned his face so that the concealed Tory could see its every feature. As he saw it, Pepper bent his head forward earnestly, passed his hand over his eyes, and shuddered.

"It's a ghost," he muttered. "No, it isn't, for he speaks. Good God! am I going crazy? No, no, it's withcraft—it can't be. I must make haste back to Charleston," and the intruder made his way back to the road as silently as he had come.

CHAPTER XVI.

AT DANGER'S BRINK.

The little scene beneath the trees set Eloise to thinking seriously. She began to foresee too plainly what the effect of Dr. Mitchell's plan might be, and while the thought sent a glow of triumph to her heart, yet it was followed by almost a feeling of horror that made her tremble. She felt that her love made her weak. After Ruth's wedding, she had begun to look upon Henry with a semi-indifference, and had felt that she was easily curing herself of that folly. Why was it then, that this love had sprung up anew in her heart, a thousand times more deep and absorbing than before? It was a question she could not answer to herself. The past seemed almost as much a dream to her as it was to Henry. This passion seemed to be a being of a new life, and it was felt for the husband of another. This state of things must cease, she felt, for she was not strong enough to bear it.

Their two lives must be far apart. If he could never remember of his own accord that Ruth was his wife, it must be made known to him, and he must live out the fulfillment of his duty, even though this new being of his had wrapped itself up wholly in another, and that other herself. She felt now that this twice-born love was too strong for her, and that it would be impossible for her to put it aside as before. She must live out her life alone with her dear father to comfort her. Close to that kindly heart she would find the solace that the world denied her, which must stand in lieu of lover, husband and all—for she knew she would never love again. Yet not once did her faith to Ruth waver. It was because she was fearful that some word might be spoken to her by him, which she should not hear, that she wished matters to be placed aright. Already even that look, that pressure of the hand, had been a treason. Nothing like that must occur again.

“Ruth, dear,” she said to her cousin, that evening, “do you not think that it would be better to try some other plan with Henry?”

“Some other plan,” repeated Ruth, looking up quickly from her needlework. “How?”

"I only thought," said Eloise, coloring, slightly, that he did not seem to be able to bring his mind any nearer to the past of his own accord, and as the doctor's plan does not seem to progress well, I thought—"

"Thought what, dear?"

"I thought that it would be better to tell him just how matters stood. That you were his wife."

Ruth paled a little before she answered. It was apparent that a struggle was going on within her, in which pride and love were striving for the mastery.

"Let me think," she said.

"Oh! my dear," exclaimed Eloise, flinging herself upon the lap of her cousin, and pressing her fair cheek against the darker one, "I am sure it would all be for the best. When he looks upon you as his wife, the old love will come back again, just as strong as before. You must see that."

"You are a dear little, vehement champion," said Ruth, with a weary smile, "and I have no doubt you think that you are right, but I am of a different opinion."

"Oh, no! no! do not say that. It is your pride that speaks now."

"I think not, cousin. Listen: When a woman loves, she wishes all happiness to the man of her heart. His wishes are paramount. It is only the selfish ones who want all and give nothing. Henry forgets his past, his home, his friends, and even his love and his bride fail to bring back to him that spark of memory which binds him to the past. Why should I seek to force myself upon him because of a tie that has bound us only in the eyes of the world; a mere form that has made us one, without that wedding of nature which is in reality the deep and binding tie, which naught but death should break. If one were to be separate and distinct from the other, I should say that the latter was the more so. No, do not look shocked, for my opinions will live to be those of better people, and nobler minds than either yours or mine."

"But still, you are his wife."

"His wife only to those who know, and they will never tell him. Let his life go on free as the air, unless he should, perchance, recall the past, and that I almost dread. Bend closer,

dearest Eloise, for I want to whisper to you. A dreadful feeling seems to have come over me, for I feel—Heaven help me—that I do not love him as I ought.”

“Oh! Ruth,” with a startled look.

“It is the truth. There seems to be something that is turning me against him. I do not seem to be learning to dislike him, but the old tenderness is gone. I have felt ashamed and angry with myself for allowing an infirmity that should only bind the one who loves and the dear one closer together, to make me waver in my affection; but love is a quality we cannot control, and will have its own sweet way.”

“Darling, this is terrible!”

“Is it not?” said Ruth, with a sigh that was almost a groan. “Still, how can you wonder? Have you not noticed how his sickness has changed him? He is more dreamy. His very eyes seem larger, and his voice is changed; not for the worse, I admit, but then it is a change. His walk, too! Have you not noticed that it is not as it used to be. Oh! there are a thousand little things which are so changed in him that it seems almost like asking me to love another man.”

"Ruth, dear, your sorrow is making you visionary, and your imagination leads you to dream in this manner."

"Eloise," exclaimed Ruth, putting her fingers under her cousin's chin, and raising the sweet face so that she could look into the clear eyes. "You have noticed it yourself. *I have seen your eyes, as you looked at him.*"

"Perhaps I have," answered Eloise, coloring deeply at the unintended thrust, "but not nearly as much as you paint the picture. There is a difference. Remember, he was very near death's door."

"Yes, into the jaws of death, and death has not given me back the man I loved."

"Please, please, Ruth, do not let him be told. It is the very best way, believe me, and you will love him again, just as of old. This feeling of yours is only fancy, after all. You must admit that such is the case."

Poor little swayed and almost broken blossom. How it was struggling for itself. But Ruth would not listen to her sweet counsellor. Her mind was made up. She was his wife, yes, in all fact; but if she could prevent it he should never be made aware of that fact, until

his own waking memory should tell him, and now, even that day she dreaded. So Eloise dropped the subject, feeling, with a sinking at the heart, that her troubles were to begin with the new battle against herself, and this she felt she could confide to no one.

Of course, Henry would be coming again the next day; she felt it, and prepared to avoid him; so taking a book for company, she walked out to the edge of the little brook, and wandered slowly up its mossy sides, far into the wooded slope. There was solitude beneath Nature's canopy, and the birds were close confidants. To them she could whisper her secrets, and they would not publish them to the world, or if they did, it would be in a language all their own.

She took her way to a favorite spot, where there was a little clearing, in which the sun did not penetrate, excepting during the middle of the day, and where a gnarled root offered a natural seat that was as easy as if fashioned by the hand of man. Here she rested and threw off her bonnet, while she breathed the cool, scented air of the forest. Often had she and Henry sought that spot, when they were

playmates in youth, and there was the moss-grown rock, upon which he used to sit while they rested from some childish jaunt. How things had changed since then. She fell to ruminating, and forgot the book, which had fallen at her feet. She must have been dreaming for some time before she was aroused by the rustling of the leaves across the brook, and the crackling of the twigs from a heavy tread. She started up quickly, and caught her breath, for there, on the very edge of the rushing water was the man she had sought the solitude, to avoid.

There was a glad light in his eyes and a smile on his lips as he looked across at her and shook his head, mockingly.

"Ah! truant," he cried, "I have caught you at last."

"Take care," she said, warningly, "the stones are loose on the brook bed, and you will fall if you try to step across. Go back, and I will come home soon."

"Hadn't you better come now?" he asked, with a happy little laugh. "You see, I've caught you."

"Not yet, sir. Now do go home."

For answer he drew back a few steps, took a run and a spring that carried him over the raging brook, as lightly as a bird. "After a while," he said, in answer to her last question as he seated himself on the mossy stone, and picked up the neglected book. Then there was a silence for a few moments, while Eloise seated herself, and looked vexed as she pulled to pieces a wood blossom, and studiously avoided his gaze.

"You are angry with me," he said, deep contrition in his voice.

No answer, but the blossom suffered.

"What a cosy nook you have found. You seem a veritable woodland queen, seated on your nature's throne."

"Do not subjects obey their queen?"

"They should, certainly."

"I think I commanded you to go home."

His brow darkened for a moment, and then he arose to his feet, and looked down on her. She did not dare to meet his eyes for fear her resolution would fail her, or that he might read the deep gladness that was in her heart, in spite of all, to think that he had sought her out.

"Since you seem really to wish it, of course I can but obey." There was deep pain in his voice, but not the agony that was at her heart.

"How did you find me out?" she said, being sore tempted to learn if he had really come to find her. She was a woman, and women love to be loved.

"I missed you at the house, and Luce told me she had seen you take the brook path—I thought you would follow its course, for I have heard you say that you loved to hear the water as it gurgled over its pebbly bed, or rushed between the broken rocks. You see, I was right."

So he even remembered her very words. Ah! he did love her. No matter what might come. No matter what she might suffer in the future, she would always remember that. He loved her. She must never let him breathe a whisper of it to her ears, or give her one endearing word, yet it was sweet to feel that she had his heart.

"You will let me remain here with you a little while, will you not?" he asked, appealingly.

"I had rather not. I came here to be alone—to think. Go back to Ruth," (almost angrily she said this,) "she will amuse you. I have other things to think about."

"Of course, if it is your wish," he said, coldly, his fine lip curling, as if in scorn. "I will do as you say," and he turned away with a grand tread, and made for the woods toward the house. As he left she raised her eyes, timidly, to gaze on his retreating figure. She almost half hoped that he would turn that she might see the dear face, but he kept straight on. A dreamy smile came to her face, and a deep flush to her cheek, as she fell into a sweet reverie. He loved her. She knew it as well as if he had spoken it in volumes; as well as though he had declared it to her, with every vow of constancy that a lover gives. What cared she for the world. For the time, there alone in her little retreat, she would have her way, and love him if she wished, with no one to say her nay. It was innocence itself.

He was her very own. Her glance fell upon the book he had handed her, and a glow passed over her while her eyes shone like stars.

His hand had touched it. In secret—as he had thought—his lips had lightly touched it as he had handed it to her. With a quick movement she raised the volume to her lips and kissed it as he had done.

“I love him—I love him,” she sighed.

And the little brook laughed up into her face as it caught a few rays of the sunlight that broke throughout the trees and seemed to gurgle back in comfort to her swelling heart: “He loves you—he loves you.”



CHAPTER XVII.

A BITTER WOOING.

Eloise was always rather cold to him after this, and Henry himself kept rather distant in his manner. He was offended at what he considered her coldness, and could not forgive her for what he could not help but believe was but a little bit of coquetry. How different would have been his feelings had he known the truth. With what tender sorrow, then, would he have thought of her whom now he deemed so careless of the feelings of others. For a few days he kept away entirely, and while it was a relief to Eloise to have him absent, still there was a lonesome feeling about the place that was hardly bearable. Then she felt how utterly her soul had gone out to this man, upon whom she could never have a claim, and for a time she would feel almost ashamed at the depth of affection that filled her heart. It was a thousand fold more in-

tense, more consuming than the love she had borne him before the misfortune had overtaken him. Before, she could go to her kind father, in her sorrow, as he had asked her to, but now, there was a shrinking within herself, that made her secretive. Why was it? Was her heart becoming guilty? Was she thoughtfully fostering this sweet love, in place of trying to kill it at once, for nothing good could come of it. Then she would cover her face with her two small hands and weep bitter tears. Why, oh, why should she be so miserable? She, who had never intentionally wronged even an insect in her whole young life.

If there was only some one in whom she could confide it might lighten her sorrow, but there was no one, and she must bear it all alone, battling against him, and love, the while, for she knew that he would not give her up. She felt that her rebuff in the wood had not driven him from her, only for a spell, and he would return again, handsomer and more lovable than ever. Why could she not tell him how matters stood, in spite of the others? Surely it would be best, knowing, as

she did, that his memory would never be reclaimed in the manner Dr. Mitchell had pointed out. And then Ruth was learning to forget her love for him. Oh! What a pity, what a fatality, had been that hasty wedding. But for that, all would now be well. The maiden blushed to herself at the possibilities that arose at the thought. What, oh, what would be the end of it all?

In spite of her feeling that Henry would not remain long away, he failed to come, and she unconsciously drooped at his absence, while Ruth was supremely indifferent. She had apparently put him out of her life. He was nothing to her, and she now began to fear his return to the past, a state of things that would force her to assume the duties of a wife to one she did not love, a thing than which, to a true woman, nothing could be more terrible. She shut her white teeth firmly, and resolved that if the time should come, she would tell him the state of her feelings, and refuse.

Roger watched his daughter with an anxious eye. He noticed that she drooped, but he did not but half divine the cause. He had thought that she was forgetting that old heart-trouble

and had paid little attention to her of late. Now, however, he began to worry, and look for the cause.

"My little girl is too inactive," he said to her one afternoon, "and I shall insist that she takes more exercise. The roses are leaving those dear cheeks, and we must bring them them back again. Here, Jim," he called to the black who was raking the lawn in front of the house, "run and tell Sam to put the ladies' saddle on Queen and lead her here. Now go, my child, and don your riding gown, for you must go and get a bit of the forest air."

Eloise arose, dutifully.

"Perhaps it will do me good," she said. "Dear old papa; always thinking of his little girl, is he not? How proud she is of her old darling," and she flung her arms about his neck for an instant, and then ran lightly up the stairs. After she left, Roger shook his head sadly, for a large tear glistened on his sleeve.

"This will never do," he said to himself, as he watched the little briny globule until it was absorbed by the cloth. "Tears are not what I wish to come to the life of my pet."

Sam soon appeared, leading Queen, a glossy chestnut sorrel animal, with a bright eye and intelligent head. She appeared a little restive, as Sam held her in front of the steps, waiting for his young mistress to appear. Roger eyed her with a critical eye.

"She looks rather full of life, to-day, does she not, Sam?" he asked.

"She habn't bin drib much, massa," responded Sam, from between the huge twin rows of ivories that adorned the large mouth. "She is boun' to be all right after Miss Eloise ride her a bit."

Further conversation was interrupted by the young lady herself, who appeared dressed for her ride. She patted her favorite animal affectionately on the finely arched neck, the intelligent beast giving a pleased whinny in answer, then, giving a foot to Sam, she sprang lightly into the saddle.

"Good-by," she called to them, waving her whip, and galloped into the road, where she soon disappeared from view behind the thick growth of trees.

"She is better already," mused Roger, after she had left. "How the sparkle came to her

eye, and the color to her cheek. I must get her into the saddle every day, for a time."

Eloise galloped Queen for quite a distance at a smart pace, until the woods grew quite thick, and then she turned into a bridle path that lead between the trees, making a short cut to another highroad. This path led close to the retreat near the brook, where she had parted last with Henry, and she let the reins fall on the neck of the horse, and fell into a deep reverie. Queen knew the road well, having traveled it many times before with his mistress, and walked lazily until the gurgle of the brook was heard in the distance. Then she pricked up her ears, visions of her usual cooling drink of fresh spring water causing her to quicken her pace a little.

Straight on went the little animal, until her forefeet were planted in the laughing, rushing water, and then the nostrils were buried deep in the brook, as the refreshing liquid was drawn down the pretty throat. The heart of the maiden beat fast, as the scene about her brought freshly to her mind the last time she had seen the one she loved so fondly. There was the very break in the bank of the little

brook, where his springing foot had broken loose the moss and rock. There was also the print of the foot where he had alighted after springing across. She reined Queen a little to one side, so that the hoofs would not obliterate the mark. There, too, was the rock upon which he had seated himself, when he had handed her the book, fresh kissed by his passionate lips. A deep sigh came from her heart, as she again saw him leave her with that white, stern face, when he had disappeared in the spreading leaves, without once looking back. How her coldness must have hurt him.

Unable to bear it longer, she wheeled her steed about, and retraced her way to the high-road. Here she allowed the little animal to have her own way, and Queen walked slowly along, pausing now and then to snatch a bite at a tempting branch of tender young leaves that hung within easy reach. Busy with her thoughts, she took little heed that her horse had stopped beneath some succulent underbrush. Lost in her dreams, Eloise little knew the danger that lurked above her, a danger that seemed terrible and certain. On the thick

limb overhead, hidden by the closely growing leaves, crouched a long dark body, that clung closely to the bark. The thick muscular neck seemed to swell with a fierce passion, and the rounded ears, lay closely drawn to the fur of the quivering brute.

Why did it not launch itself upon its prey? Unsuspecting, the girl allowed the horse to feed in silence, and it was probably to this very quietude that she owed her safety. Should she make an attempt to move, there was little doubt that the animal would spring upon her and bury its cruel claws in her tender flesh. Just below the spot, the road took a sudden turn, and in that direction came the quiet sound of the hoofs of a horse upon the soft road. The rider was approaching leisurely, at a walk. The brute overhead heard the sound, for its tail quivered nervously. It did not change its position, nor even glance in the direction, but it was evident that the beast did not intend to lose its prey. Still it waited, evidently thinking there was time enough.

The horseman turned the bend in the road, and the eyes of Eloise and Henry met for an instant. Her face flushed, and she trembled in

her saddle. He turned deathly pale, and she pitied him; but she was not aware of the cause of his pallor, which was terrible to behold. He had seen what she had not, the dark form over her head, which now raised itself slowly upon its haunches, and concentrated its muscles until they stood out like whip cords. Henry's heart stood still, then he gave his horse a mighty lash with his whip, and a yell of rage broke from him, while the huge black animal, he rode, plunged forward with a snort, and tore up the road.

Little Queen threw up her head, frightened at the yell, and shied toward the tree, wheeling about at the same time, and then down, like a dark streak, came the body of the springing beast, just a second too late, for one of its sharp claws just tore away part of the flesh at the root of Queen's tail, and the heavy black hunter Henry rode went over the disappointed beast like a flash, striking it with a hoof and rolling it over in the dust, while the two horses fairly flew up the road.

The heart of the girl seemed to fly up in her throat, and choke her as the consciousness of her averted danger came to her. She reeled in

the saddle for a moment, until it seemed as though she must lose her balance and be crushed against the earth. She was a superb horsewoman, however, and retained her seat, at the same time attempting to check her steed, which fairly flew over the ground, speeding the tree trunks by until she seemed almost dizzy. Then she learned for the first time that Queen was running away with her. Shutting her teeth firmly, she held the reins tightly, and resolved to ride it out. She knew that she could do so, unless her horse took a notion to bolt into the woods. Then, indeed, would she be lost, for the trunks and branches would sweep her from the saddle.

Behind her came the beating of the ponderous hoofs of the black hunter, giving hard chase, with love and determination upon his back.

"Hold fast!" came the call to her in the loved voice, "and I'll soon catch you."

She did not answer, but proved her claim to good horsemanship by sitting as erect as a statue. The race kept up, with Henry sometimes gaining a little, sometimes losing ground. At last the animal showed signs of fatigue by

lagging slightly, when the huge hunter, to whom Henry's weight was as a feather, gained rapidly. Urging him still more, the noble animal ran alongside of the frightened mare, and kept there.

"Quick now," cried Henry, bending and passing his arm about her waist. "Loosen your foot from the stirrup. Now!" and with a quick effort, he snatched her from the saddle. Queen sprung from under her like a shot, and, released from the weight, soon disappeared in advance. Gradually Henry checked the speed of his noble animal, which he turned, allowing it to walk for a spell. When he had lifted Eloise from her seat, he had seated her before him, keeping one arm about her waist to support her. Now he noticed that she was very pale, and the lids had dropped over the glorious eyes while the fair head was rested against his breast. Slowly he bent his head until his trembling lips rested lightly upon the loved head, so light that she could hardly feel them, yet her heart told her what he had done, and a flush came to her pale face, while the eyes opened.

"You must not," she gasped. "Respect my enforced position."

"I will," he said, abruptly.

"You are not angry?" after a few moments of silence.

"Oh, no!" a little wearily.

"I have forgotten to thank you. You have saved my life. I feel, I know it!"

"Thank chance, rather. It was but our own good luck that the beast missed his aim. Say no more about it. You will feel better when it is forgotten."

"I shall never forget it," with a little shudder.

"Are you quite comfortable?"

"Yes, very—that is, I am riding quite easy."

"I understand," this very bitterly.

There was silence between them for a time, then he spoke again:

"I think we had better go in by the stables. I will set you down there, and we can walk to the house. They would be less startled."

"You know best," she said, simply.

"I would that you thought I knew best in all things," he answered, passionately.

He longed to tell her of his love, this beautiful being that he held so close in his arms, near his throbbing heart, yet he steeled himself against the temptation. He would not give her the opportunity of saying that he had taken advantage of their position. So nothing more was said. He dared not trust himself to speak, and she feared her own weakness. The pressure of his arm, and the wild beating of her heart moved her inwardly. She longed to fling her arms about him, and tell him how dear he was to her. Would the suspense never end?

He walked with her from the stables, and into the drawing room. She felt his eyes upon her, though her own were cast down. She sank into a seat, and he stood before her. She felt that the blow was about to fall, yet was powerless to avert it. Her brave spirit had given way at last. Well, let the worst come. She was tired of battling, weary of warring with her own heart.

He stood before her gazing down upon the girl he loved, who sat before him with bent head, her clasped hands trembling violently.

“You know what I am going to say?”

"Yes, oh, yes," wearily.

"That I love you. That since I first opened my eyes upon what little I knew of this big, beautiful world, your face has been to me more than the world itself. In it have I read my light, my life, my future. The world is, or is not, just as you make it for me. Tell me, do you love me?"

She arose impulsively, all her soul in her eyes, and his flashed joyously as he saw the look. She put up her hands to ward him off, as he would have sprung toward her. A shadow passed over his face.

"It is my duty to tell you," she began, in an unsteady, weary, broken little voice, out of which all the life had gone, "that no matter what my feelings may be in this, or—or yours, there is something stronger, which must regulate the actions of both."

"And what may that be?" he asked, a little coldly.

"Let me answer," said a calm voice, as Ruth stepped into the room from the veranda. "You will pardon, I think, the fact that I have overheard you, in a confession that ordinarily might bring a little shame to one in

my position, yet, at present, on account of my utter indifference, does not."

"What is this mystery that I see in your faces? Out with it at once, please, and let us have done with enigmas."

"That quality which Eloise refers to," said Ruth, firmly, placing an arm about the trembling girl to support her, "is duty. In short, Henry Carter, *you are my husband!*"

"My God!" That was all, and a faint cry from Eloise, as he turned and staggered toward the door. Here he paused and turned, passing a hand in a bewildered manner over his brow.

"Whatever you may say," he cried, hoarsely, "there is some devil's mischief in this. Heaven could not be so cruel. I tell you it is all false. Something here," striking his breast, fiercely, "tells me that *you are not my wife.*"

He gave a heartrending glance at Eloise, and strode from the room, and they saw him no more as a visitor for many days.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME OF CUPID'S CAPERS.

During the autumn of 1780, although the British had suffered so greatly in the Carolinas, that they were already making preparations to abandon the province, the city of Charleston still remained in their possession, a point they had held ever since its capture by Clinton, on May 12th of the same year. During the whole term of the ascendancy of their arms in that portion of the country, they had been so harrassed by Marion, Sumpter and Pickens, those brave free lances, that life was almost a burden to them. Of Marion, Cornwallis once wrote: "He has so wrought on the minds of the people, that there is scarcely an inhabitant between the Pedee and the Santee, that is not in arms against us." Yet, the British held tenaciously to Charlston, Savannah and Wilmington. In the former city, with the exception of the Tories, who

were in strong sympathy with the invaders, the inhabitants looked upon the armed holders of the city with the deepest hatred, and often skirmishes were held between them in the open streets, mostly occurring after nightfall, when darkness made small ambushes more safe.

The troops themselves were allowed more liberty than is usually accorded on such occasions, in consequence, and deeds of violence were often committed, and were prone to be winked at by a majority of the officers, while those who were more just, found it almost impossible to stem the tide of lawlessness, which seemed to increase rather than diminish. Brawls were of nightly occurrence, and it was dangerous for a maiden of the city to venture out after nightfall, even when accompanied by an escort, as she was almost certain to become the object for some indecent assault from one or more of the ribald soldiers.

Into this hot-bed of hatred and passion, Walter Fuller had taken himself, in search of his friend. He had never for a moment forgotten his promise to attempt a rescue; but duty had called him, immediately upon his

return to his troop, and he had been compelled to put off his schemes for a time, until the short campaign mapped out for him and the troop, which he was obliged to command in Henry's absence, was carried out. Henry was too valuable a man to be lost without some attempt at his recovery, so Walter was allowed to take the troop into the immediate vicinity of Charleston, and use such means as he saw fit toward the recapture of his captain.

"If you cannot get your hands upon him," Marion had said, "then capture some of them, sufficiently high in station to admit of an exchange. Above all, be careful of yourself, for I could little afford to lose you both."

Walter had seen his troop in a safe position in the woods, where he could get them, should he need assistance, and made his way to the city, clad as a simple gentleman of leisure, save that a dagger lay hidden in his breast, and a pistol that had often proved his friend, was safely buckled where the broad skirts to his coat hid it from view. Then he began a practice of wandering about where he could meet parties of soldiers and overhear their conversation, trusting to luck that some

of them would mention the subject nearest to his heart, and perhaps give him a clue as to where his friend was confined. Could he but find this out, he had little fear but what he would conceive a plan for the opening of the prison doors.

Often he would wander about the outskirts of the city, and once even passed directly by the place in which Henry was confined, yet without knowing it. The autumn weather was beautiful, and had there been nothing on the young man's mind, he would have taken pleasure in the rather lazy life he was leading, as being somewhat of a rest after the long campaign upon which he had been engaged.

Passing one day through one of the streets, over which the trees nearly met in an arch, he was drawn by the beauty of a little cottage by the roadside. It was a simple little building, that was made beautiful by running rose vines, which clung about the little portico, and were even forcing their way on to its roof. It was a cool spot, and Walter leaned against a tree and rested for a time. So far his search had availed him little, and he was beginning to despair. He fell to thinking

deeply and was aroused by the opening of a window in the little upper story of the cottage. He raised his eyes for a moment, and then forgot his thoughts, forgot Henry, and was almost lost to the world in the contemplation of what he saw. Only a face at the window; yet it was a face that was destined to fill his heart, for long, long after.

It was a face that might have filled others with but a passing fancy, yet no man would have passed without giving an admiring look at its owner. As she flung open the sash she rested her hand upon the frame and looked out. Walter was so hidden from her that he had an ample opportunity to study her at his leisure. The sun's rays lit up the pretty head, crowned with its rich dark hair, the natural curls waving gently in the breeze that just stirred the leaves of the vines about her. The sweet face bore just the slightest tint of olive, the cheeks reddened by the glow of health seeming to have an ever varying tint. The forehead was low, but broad, the ears small and shell-like, and the throat, which was exposed by the soft lace that was worn about the neck, and fastened together at the belt,

was full and round. The arms were bare, and were round and tapering, clear to the wrists that were finished by a patrician hand with pink tipped fingers. The eyes seemed so full of expression as to be capable of a language all their own; eyes that are seldom seen, but when once seen, are never forgotten. They were large, and the centers of the deepest hazel hue, the whites, occupying more of the orifice than is usual, being of a glossy white. They were eyes that could read to the soul, flash arrows of scorn, or swim in a sea of love's tenderness; eyes that are supposed only to belong to the beauties of Circassia.

For only an instant she stood thus, and then turned with a smile to greet some one who had just entered the room, some one who spoke in a pleasant voice, evidently the girl's mother, so at least Walter thought, and who addressed her as Kate. He hardly heeded the words, so wrapped up was he in the vision before him. "Kate." He had never thought that the plain little name could be so sweet. "Kate." It was the prettiest name in the world, when coupled with the sweet vision before

him. Then he waited breathlessly to hear her voice.

"I cannot see why he does not return," he heard her say, "for he should have been here an hour ago."

The voice with its music, went straight to Walter's heart, yet a pain went with it. "He," who could "He" be? He was jealous already. Perhaps it was her lover, or more probably her husband. What a fool he was to mind it so. What was it to him? He laughed, a bitter little laugh, at his folly, and turned to go, angry with himself. Just then he saw a hand flash at the window, and something fell outside, striking on the ground in the shade of the bushes. He hesitated for a moment, irresolute. She could not see him; he must find what it was. He sprang to the object and picked it up. It was only a little bunch of faded roses, that she had thrown from the window, as being no longer of use. Yet there was something else, for a thorn in one of the stems had caught a slight, fleecy lace handkerchief, and carried it out with the discarded flowers. Walter appropriated it, inhaled the perfume that still clung about it,

and thrust it into his breast. He selected the freshest of the buds, and thrust the stem through the lace to the flowing lapel of his coat.

He hurried away, feeling a little guilty, yet with a strange new feeling at his heart. This last act of hers had filled him with a vague hope. Surely, if the blossoms had been given her by a lover, or husband, she would not thus have discarded them. Consequently, she was a maiden, and to be wooed. And why should he not woo her? Others had found time during the war to win love with their fame. Why should he not add a conquest of love to his conquests in battle? He shook his symmetrical, powerful frame together, and walked with head erect, and a new light in his eyes. He had resolved that love also should be his.

Walter had little peace after this, for his heart had been deeply assailed. He would have been worse troubled, had he known that the lady of his newly awakened passion had been more observing than he had given her credit for. She had missed her bit of lace instantly after it had been torn from her hand,

and had stepped to the window just in time to see the young man as he bent to pick up the discarded roses. With quick femininity she hid herself behind a curtain of lace at the side of the window, and watched his strange actions. She saw him raise the fabric to his lips, and she blushed hotly, angry at his presumption; then, as he arose, and she saw the handsome, almost Titanic head outlined against the deep green of the leaves, she was less incensed against him. Who could the handsome stranger be? She had never seen him about there before, and Kate Haven felt a new interest come to her, that gave her an interest in life which she had not felt for some time.

But little success had attended her search for Percy. Captain Strong had learned for her, that he had been on board the ship that had sailed in advance of them, but here the search had ceased, for on shore little could be learned of him, except that he had accompanied some officers, and had gone on the march with some reinforcements sent out to assist the southern army. Where he was at that time they could not learn, so Kate had ac-

cepted their invitation to come and live with them in the little cottage which they had procured to live in while the captain should remain in Charleston.

Between Kate and the couple a sincere affection had sprung up, and they looked upon the dear brave girl almost as a younger sister, an affection which she in turn gave to them both, with interest. Kate proved a wonderful help to them, and the two ladies were company for each other. The girl's fresh, high-bred beauty soon began to be noticed, and many were the young provincials who would have done much to bring a smile of recognition to her face, but she held aloof from them all, and soon became known as the British icicle, to the disappointed young men who failed to scrape up an acquaintance with her. All this was noticed by pretty Mrs. Strong, who often twitted her about her conquests, and had many a laugh over them with the jovial captain.

"Take care, Kate," she would say, "or you will lose your heart to some of these new world gallants."

"Not I," would Kate answer, with a fine

curl of her lip. "Gallants, indeed, with their dark faces and homespun garments."

Perhaps some faint memory of her answers came to her as she watched Walter disappear up the road, and a faint flush came to deepen the roses on her cheeks. She was almost angry with herself for having given him a thought. He was probably some shopkeeper's son, and a rebel of the most pronounced kind. She was hardly well enough up in the politics of the day to be able to state definitely what crime a rebel might be charged with, but she was certain that it must be something not far removed from the terrible. So she turned away from the window in fine scorn, and tried to forget all about it, but, try as she might, the vision of the young man with the head of a god, and the step of a hero, haunted her in a manner that was exasperating to a young lady of her well regulated mind.

As for Walter, he haunted the street after that, and watched for another view of the vision with indifferent success, for he could only feast his eyes upon the object of his adventure through the lace curtains, which gave him but a faint outline of the form, and that only

when she drew near to them. The young lady herself was in a better position, for she could see outside quite plainly, and marked his anxious looks with varied feelings. What a stubborn young man it was, to hang about at all hours, and so quietly, too. At first, she was angry at his perserverance, then she began to pity him, and finally ended by wondering who he was. Of course it was unladylike to wonder, and she was blushing to herself as soon as the thought came.

Matters might have gone on this way indefinitely had not something occurred to change the whole course of events; an event which proved an adventure only to Walter, yet which made the young man shine in her eyes as a veritable hero of the first magnitude.

The young man was wandering aimlessly about the city one evening, thoroughly down on his luck, and only passing away the time until his eyes should grow weary with the want of rest, and warn him that it was time to retire, when his legs unconsciously lead him toward the shady lane and the vine-clad cottage. The moon was bright, and high in the heavens, so that the road had a ghostly

appearance where the deep shadows of the trees lay in dark contrast to the brilliancy of the fields, and the reflection of the queen of night upon the sides and roofs of the few houses. A little in advance of him he noticed that two female forms were strolling along. They had been concealed by the shadows of the trees, but now they had passed into a bright spot, caused by the scarcity of overhanging boughs, and could be plainly seen. Surely they were tempting fate to be out alone at that hour, for, though it was early, prowling men might be about.

The thought had hardly come to him when a dark form sprang quickly and silently from the opposite side of the road, followed by two more, and approached the two female figures. Walter quickened his pace as he saw the ladies pause and shrink closely together as if feeling that it would be useless to fly. The man in advance spoke some words in a low voice, the tone of which only reached Walter's ears, yet at the same instant the taller of the two turned her face and looked in his direction. The moon lit up the pale startled features, and Walter's heart gave a bound as he recognized

the fair being who had never for a moment been absent from his thoughts. She could not have seen him for he was as yet in the shadow, yet she seemed to appeal to him personally for aid.

The two other ruffians had come up with the leader, who was exacting a kiss from the ladies by way of prelude. Then he reached out an arm to clutch hold of Kate, who shrunk from him with a little startled cry, then faced him boldly.

"Oh! but you will suffer for this insult," she cried, her nostrils dilating and the fine eyes blazing with fury. "I warn you that I never forget a face, and you will be sought and found on the morrow."

"Fine speeches for night birds," replied one of them, his companions laughing at his sally. "But hadn't you better let us three brave gents escort you to a pretty seat in the shade of the bushes, while we teach you—"

The sentence was never finished, for the avenger, armed with love and his giant strength, was upon them. Two of them were seized by the neck and their heads crashed together with a force that seemed to crush them,

and they fell motionless to the earth as he let them go from that iron grasp. The other had attempted to fly, but Walter was too quick for him, and placing one hand at each side of his waist, raised him above his head, while the wretch begged for mercy, and, with all his power, flung him from him. The man flew from the grasp of those muscles of steel, and went crashing through the bushes that lined the road, where, after a moan or two, he lay quiet.

The whole scene had been but the work of an instant, but in that time Kate had recognized him, and her heart throbbed with pleasure. She saw the fearful strength of which he was master, and wondered that such shapely limbs and small hands could hold such force, and then, as he raised his hat, showing the light curls and the flushed face, she fell to loving him, and this time she was not ashamed of it.

"Allow me to thank you, sir," said Mrs. Strong, in a voice that trembled slightly. "We owe you the deepest gratitude." Then, as Kate only looked down, afraid to meet the ardent glance she felt upon her, she said,

"Why on earth don't you thank the young man, Kate, dear?"

Then Kate had raised her eyes, and lifted them to his face, and in them he had read his thanks before they were spoken.

"If gratitude can—" she began.

"I pray you, say nothing" said Walter, hastily, "but let me see you to your home at once."

They hurried down the road and were soon before the little cottage, where Mrs. Strong went directly in, after giving thanks once more, and asking the young man to call and see her husband, who would wish also to thank him for her again.

Left alone with his adored one, for a few moments, Walter was at a loss for words. What could he say, except good-night, and then leave her? But she, with woman's ready wit, opened a way.

"I hope you have not killed those poor men," she said, in a voice like a bird.

"I hope I have quite!" cried Walter, hotly, "the brutes."

"Oh! how bloodthirsty you are!"

"How you wrong me!"

“May I—may we not know the name of our preserver, so that we may thank him in our prayers?”

“Think of me as Walter,” said the young man, hesitatingly. He hated to give her a false name, and yet his surname must be unknown to her as yet.

“Walter—what?”

He flushed as her lips spoke his name, and the blush was reflected upon her face. By a sudden impulse he remembered a name belonging to a schoolfellow, and gave it: “Walter Bivis.”

“Good-night, then—Mr. Bivis,” she said, sweetly, holding out her hand. Walter bent to kiss it, but she snatched it away, while a quick breath left her lips. “No, no,” she said, and ran toward the house. Here she paused to look back, and saw him dejected and sad. She flew back again, and held out her hand once more. Her love urged her on. She would let him know she had thought of him. He kissed the little fingers that trembled beneath his touch.

“Now, sir—*what have you done with my roses?*”

He looked up guiltily, but she was gone like a flash. He watched her window until the light went out.



CHAPTER XIX.

A DOUBLE DISCOVERY.

Of course Walter availed himself of the invitation offered him to call upon the ladies, and the next day he could hardly curb his impatience, so filled was he with the desire to again look upon the sweet face, and hear the voice that thrilled him every time he heard its loved tones. For the time, at least, poor Henry was entirely forgotten, so filled was his young friend with his new experience. He did not stop to look ahead, and so the difficulties that must of necessity beset the path of his love. Even now, he was compelled to answer to an assumed name for fear his own might be recognized, and there were other difficulties, yet he did not seem to heed them. The present was sufficient for him. He had been allowed to see her. Chance had given him the opportunity to do her a service, and he had kissed her hand. While he waited for the time

to pass, he lived over again the scene, over and over again, in his thoughts, so sweet was the remembrance.

How beautiful she was, and then she had noticed him before, else why that parting sentence about the roses. Her handkerchief, he felt, he must return; but he would never part with that faded little bud, that now lay neatly folded in a paper, worn near his heart. She had allowed him to, to kiss her hand. It must be that she thought well of him; that she had intended that he should hope, else why had she come back to him, like a contrite fairy, and given him that little hand? Impatiently he awaited the afternoon, and then, when he thought it late enough, had left the door of his room, and taken his way, with a beating heart toward the little cottage that held his heart.

Meanwhile, Kate had been filled with a vague feeling of unrest. She felt that she had been too forward toward the young man, and feared that he would have but a bad opinion of her in consequence. Then, too, her friend would not keep still about the occurrence of the night, and not satisfied with reciting it in

a tragic manner to her husband, she must needs dwell upon it at great length before the young lady.

"What a splendid fellow he was, Kate, dear," she rattled on. "What a pity that you dislike all these provincials with such a deep hatred, for I am certain he would be such good company. So handsome, too. Why, he has the look of a Viking, with his blonde locks."

"How you do rattle on," answered Kate, annoyed at the reference to her hatred of provincials. "Perhaps he may be a foreigner. Mayhap one of these same Vikings you are so fond of referring to."

"Let us hope so," with a little laugh, "for then there may be some chance for the poor fellow; which he does not possess if a native."

"How you do talk. It is very probable that the young man cares little about us."

"Tut, tut, my bonny Kate. You know as well as I that the young fellow is madly in love with you."

"Not in the least, you sweet match-maker!" cried Kate, getting back her sprightliness under the badinage. "What a pity your occu-

pation is gone since you have arrived in America."

"Never mind, you witch. I scent a battle, and will wager that we make a match before long, if not of hands, at least of hearts."

"Your wager would be lost."

"That it would not. Ah! you think me blind, but I know a thing or two."

"Sh—here comes some one," and Kate ran to the window with a flushed face.

"Who is it, dear, knight errant?"

"Will you be quiet? No, it's the captain."

"Ah! the fairy princess is disappointed this time. Harry, my love, you are late again."

The happy captain strode into the room, kissed his pretty wife, and greeted Kate in a cheery voice:

"Always late, eh—got here now because I couldn't get here any later—detained by your affairs, though—so should have complete forgiveness."

Before any one could answer him, Kate's quick ear had detected the sound of a step on the path, and she drew back from the window.

"Some one is coming," she said.

"*Some one!*" cried Mrs. Strong, mockingly.

And she stepped to the door just as a somewhat timid knock was heard upon the panel. She opened it, and admitted the young hero of the hour, who was introduced to the captain by Kate, and was at once appropriated by him.

“My young friend!” cried he, seizing his hand and shaking it cordially. “In a service such as you have done us, thanks are superfluous. You are a gentleman, sir, and all that I can say is, that I am your debtor. When you need me, command me. It is a promise I give, to grant anything I may be able to do for you in future.”

“The thanks are mine, in being allowed to serve the ladies,” answered Walter, with a covert glance at the averted face of Kate.

“I was just about to tell the ladies,” said the captain, “that I succeeded in discovering the rascals, thanks to the one you threw into the bushes, and whose back, we find, was broken. He gave the names of the others, who we apprehended, with their skulls bandaged, and are confined in the guard house pending punishment. Young man, will you do an old soldier a favor?”

"Right willingly," assented Walter.

"Let me feel of your arm."

Walter extended it, with a smile, while the officer examined it critically, pressing his fingers against the iron biceps.

"I have seen many strong men in my time, but you teach me that appearances are deceitful—never would think it to look at you—am proud to have you for an acquaintance—in future, I hope, a friend."

"With all my heart!" cried Walter, grasping his hand in a friendly clasp.

Kate had listened to the conversation with pride in every line of her fair face. She felt that he almost belonged to her, and why should she not feel proud of him? He was so superior to other men, so grand in his strength; so handsome withal. She joined but little in the conversation, much to the disappointment of the young man, and finally the captain arose, explaining that he had matters of importance to attend to. He left their young visitor, with a hearty shake of the hand, and went out the door, followed by his wife into the yard, and the two young people were left alone together.

Walter arose and stood over her chair, looking down at the bent head.

"You asked me for your roses last night," he said, softly. "Do you want me to return them?"

"Have you them still?" she asked, not raising her head.

"Look for yourself."

She raised a flushed face, with the eyes shining like stars, to look at him. He thrust his hand into his bosom and drew out the little parcel.

"I have treasured this near my heart, never dreaming that you were aware even of my existence. It is yours, if you wish it, and I have no right to keep it, against your wish."

She put out her hand mechanically, and took the faded, dry little bud in her palm. So he had kept this little token to remind him of her, even when he had but seen her. Surely he must care for her very dearly. Then she fell to thinking of the short time she had known him, and how completely he had filled her thoughts. It was sweet to dream thus.

"You do not answer," he said, sadly.

"Do you wish very much to keep it?" she

asked, softly, touching it to her face to see if the perfume had all left it.

"It is all I have, except this," he said, dropping the filmy little lace handkerchief upon her lap.

"Will you let me keep it, if I promise to give you something better?"

"Yes, if you will, but it has become very dear to me."

He was emboldened by the expression of her face, which showed that she was disturbed; that something almost stronger than herself was prompting her actions. She trembled visibly, not daring to look him in the face, and then the pink fingers went to her neck and unclasped a tiny golden chain, which she drew from where it had laid beneath the lace, only partly concealed. Hanging to this was an old-fashioned locket, curiously wrought upon its surface. She looked at it dreamily for a moment, and then offered it to him.

"Promise me that you will not open it until you are alone," she said.

"I promise," said he, eagerly. "Nothing will be too great for me to dare for you in

return for this little gift, which I shall treasure until my last day."

He thrust the trinket in his bosom, and gazed with all his soul in his eyes at the giver, who still fumbled with the faded blossom.

"I fear you have made a poor exchange," he said.

"If so, it is a bargain of my own making," she answered, and with a little conscious blush, she placed the poor dry rose, where the locket had lain, next to her pure, fair flesh.

Walter's eyes sparkled, and he bent over her, taking her hand in his, and almost touching her hair with his lips, from which his breath came in that peculiar manner indicative of suppressed passion. She felt the close presence, and raised her head to look into his eyes. As she did so their lips nearly touched, and with an effort she calmed herself and met his gaze unflinchingly. His head swam and his eyes looked through a mist, but he heard her voice, almost in a whisper:

"Oh! pray, pray be calm. If I have been unmaidenly in my weakness, you, in your strength, should protect me from yourself."

He was master of himself in an instant

His honor, his strength had been appealed to, and he would be worthy of both. He drew himself erect, a fine color mounting to his brow.

"I was rude;" he said, "pray, forgive me."

"Oh, no, not rude; you could never be that. It was the fault of both. It is *I* you must forgive."

"Let it pass! I am reminded of my duty in more ways than one. I remember now what I am here for and must go to work at once."

"You have a duty to perform? So had I when I arrived here, but I fear I have sadly neglected it of late."

"Could I assist you?"

She looked up at him quickly. Why should she not have his help? Perhaps it would be an excuse for seeing him oftener, and besides, it might keep her in his thoughts. She confessed to herself that she loved this man, and desired that he should love her. She would enlist him with her search for Percy, and thus create a bond between them. She felt, too, that he would be a little jealous, and that would only add in the deepening of the love with which she felt that she was inspiring

him. She bade him wait for her a few moments, and tripped up-stairs, re-appearing soon after with a wide brimmed hat and fleecy white shawl.

"It is such a lovely day," she said, "and I can talk so much better under the trees. The walk will do us good and I have a mission to fulfill beside."

"You are afraid to be alone with me!" exclaimed he, a little hurt.

"That was unlike you," she said, softly, "and unkind. If I am so, it is of myself, and not of you."

He was subdued, and a tender glow passed over him. This beautiful being confessed so much, and would allow him to admit so little. Yet she was his master; he felt that and must obey her in all things.

They passed out beneath the spreading vines and down the little walk. As they did so, a soldier, in negligee uniform, passed into the yard, and started for the house. As he passed, he touched his cap to Kate, then gazed with an expression of awe at Walter, a look in which recognition beamed from every feature. The glance was mutual, for Walter recognized

the trooper whose horse he had used for his escape,

“Begorra! it’s that same young goint,” mused Teddy, as he went in quest of the captain. “A foine young man he is, that same! It’s jist nothin’ Oi’ll say forninst a sowl, but Oi’ll keep me oyes on him.”

“Teddy seems to know you,” laughed Kate. “Where have you met him?”

“I can’t say,” answered Walter, denying the whole thing, though his eyes wavered from her glance, at the lie. “Perhaps he is mistaking me for some other.”

Kate dropped the subject, and began her tale in regard to Percy. She watched Walter narrowly as she narrated it, and soon noticed the look of jealousy and suspicion that came to his face, yet she continued it to the end, and finished by telling of her own unsuccessful attempts at finding his whereabouts.

“You must think a great deal of this young Englishman!” he burst out, savagely, “to come all this way for his sake?”

Here her woman’s wit served her in good stead, for her answer came in a half laugh:

“Perchance it was only a chain of fate to bring me to you.”

His face lit up at once and he bent near her with his whole soul in his eyes.

“Tell me that you do not love him!” he cried, “and I will move Heaven and earth to find him.”

“I do not—in the way you mean,” she said, looking him full in the face with an honest smile that there was no mistaking.

They had been walking leisurely all this time, and had now reached a spot where the shade was on but one side of the road, the other being taken up with a high wall, that ran completely about a low, dark building, which looked hardly as if it was tenanted. As Kate looked up at him, her eyes caught sight of something at an upper window over the wall, and her face turned pale, as she clutched Walter’s arm fiercely. He followed the direction of her gaze, and was startled as she, and his heart gave a great leap, for there, with his face pressed close to the glass, gazing directly at him, was Henry, whom he had so long sought in vain. Only an instant did he see the apparition, for there was the flash of a

beautiful dark face, a white hand, and the curtain was drawn quickly.

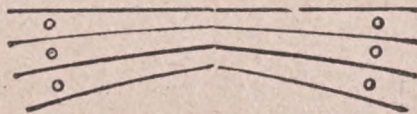
Kate clung to him convulsively, her face aglow with excitement.

"The time has come!" she cried. "He is there, perhaps a prisoner. You must find out for me."

"Who is there?" asked he, looking at her fixedly.

"Percy! the young man I have been speaking about."

He looked at her, meditatively. Was she in earnest, or was she the most consummate actress that ever goaded a man on to frenzy? He would try her, and see.



CHAPTER XX.

A TIGRESS AT BAY.

The apparition at the window had brought the memory of his duty home to Walter, and he was thoughtful, as they retraced their steps to the cottage. Kate's strange actions also troubled him, but still he trusted her enough to feel that there was some deep mystery connected with them, which he would yet fathom. It could not be that this sweet girl, with her honest face, so full of soul could be false at heart. At any rate, he would give her the benefit of a doubt. He was naturally of an unsuspicious nature, and apt to believe all things good, until they had proved themselves otherwise. Besides, he trusted the friend of his youth, and felt in his heart that Henry would do nothing base. How could these two be anything to each other, when he knew that Ruth was all in all to Henry. Time would unravel the mystery, and for time he would wait.

Kate watched his thoughtful face furtively, for a while, before she spoke. She attributed his preoccupied air to a return of the old jealousy, and felt vexed with him that he did not believe her. She felt that Percy, whom she took the prisoner to be, might be released upon application to Captain Strong, and yet she must first know for what reason he was confined, for in her haste to assist him, she might do him an irreparable injury. She resolved to leave the matter entirely in the hands of the young man who loved her, for she felt that he was strong, and capable of almost anything.

"You are silent," she ventured at last. "Of what are you thinking?"

"Of him," he answered, absently.

"You will rescue him, will you not?" she asked, appealingly, laying her hand lightly upon his arm.

The young man looked down and smiled upon her.

"Yes, with all my heart," he said, and she gave him a grateful glance. This was to be the bond between them.

He took leave of her, with every assurance

that her wishes would be fulfilled, and that but a short time would elapse ere the young man was again breathing the fresh air, and a promise to communicate to her his success. She looked at him anxiously, as he was about to leave her.

"You will not run into needless danger—promise me," she said.

"Do you care?" he whispered, bending toward her, suddenly; but she escaped from him just in time.

"Very much," she whispered, earnestly, and then disappeared in the cottage.

Walter hastened back to the house, in which he had seen his friend, to examine it more closely before making his plans. He found the high wall all about the large yard, with only one exit, and that in the front, a back gate that had been in use at some previous time, having been recently walled up. The barrier was too high to be scaled without the use of a ladder, and he must therefore procure one in some way, or make shift with a plank, which he could easily crawl up, if placed at an incline. Going round the house, he took note of the barred windows, and felt that the

room in that part of the house was well guarded, with what plank and iron could do for it. How Henry had been allowed in the other part of the house, where the windows did not have a jail-like appearance, he was at a loss to know, but felt certain that the young man must have been under guard at the time. They were evidently hatching some plot, and were trying to obtain information from their prisoner, as to the movements of the troops.

While the young man studied the situation, lost in thought, as he tried to form some plan in his fertile brain, a slight noise behind him, caused him to turn, and he was on the alert in a moment, for there stood Teddy, the trooper, whom he had so summarily unhorsed on a previous occasion. In an instant Walter had sprung upon him, and while one hand gripped his shoulder with a clasp of iron, the other was at his throat with a pressure just firm enough to keep him from crying out. There was a mild and rather roguish look in the eyes of Teddy, that caused him to slacken his hold a little.

“You look to be an honest fellow,” he said. Promise me that you will not attempt to call

for help, and I will release my hold. Do you promise?"

Teddy nodded his head as emphatically as he could, in his strained position, and Walter let go of him with a suddenness that caused him to stagger.

"Ye are that same Goliah entoirely, that yees were wanst before," he said, lugubriously. "An' ye should know first, whether Teddy Nolan is friend or foe afore you make an overt attimpt to crush the loife out o' him, entoirely."

"No need to ask that, I should think, by the dress you wear, furnished by King George."

"Thru for ye, sor. An' they do be feelin' moighty uncomfortable, in me prisint state o' moind. Whist! now. Its Oirish Oi am—though ye may not think so from me free speech—an' it's little Oi do be havin' in common with that same King George. Faith! it's an American, entoirely, Teddy is wishin' to be."

"What do you mean?" cried Walter, advancing a step nearer, impulsively.

"Hands off there, darlint," laughed Teddy, "ye do be too impressive in yer demonstrations—as the man said to the bear, when he

hugged him close. That's me whole *meanin'*, an' if Teddy Nolan can assist ye, ye young hero, here's me hand on it, and me loife goes wid it."

Walter grasped the honest fellow's hand, while there was a lump in his throat as he answered:

"If there were more like you, my honest fellow, to distinguish between right and wrong, the world would be on our side. I accept your allegiance with all the honesty in which it is given, and thank you at the same time."

"Whist! its a rebel Oi am now among yees all, an' faith its an Oirishman's privilege. The Continental Congress foriver! and the divil fly away with King George, saints presarve him! with apologies to the saints, and beggin' their pardon. Its meself that knows all about the prisoner ye are afther, for Oi was one of the troop that brought him to the jail."

"All the more blessings on you for that!" cried Walter, his eyes sparkling. "Do you know how well he is guarded?"

"Faith! an' Oi do. There is not much guard at all, an' four good men—that's three for you an' wan for me—can get him out easily."

"It must be done immediately," said Walter.

"To-night it is, thin," cried Teddy, "for that ould villain, the jailor, is away entoirely, an' there's only a crazy divil ov a monkey goint in charge. That black faced Pepper will be back to-morrow, so to-night is the toime."

"It is Ralph Pepper, then, who has him?"

"That same. Captain Harper was sent to the front, an' Pepper ran off with him on his own idea, an' put him in here."

"We must be off. Come with me while we make arrangements—or rather, you had better go to my lodging place ahead, and I will come later."

The two separated, after Walter had informed his new ally where to find his place of abode, where they met later to arrange the details. It was agreed that Teddy should appear at the rendezvous with a short ladder to serve their purpose, while Walter procured two of the best horses from the troop aside from Tempest, his own favorite, which would be close by, in charge of one of his most trusted men. He knew that it would not be policy to attempt battle in the open streets, and they must resort to strategy and speed to get

safely away. His thoughts smote him a little as he remembered that he must leave Kate far behind, but duty was imperative, and he resolved to come back to the city at his earliest opportunity and seek her out. Perhaps he would lose her forever. His heart sank at the thought, but he could not draw back. His duty lay clear, before him, and love must be thrown to the winds for the time being, at least.

That night he was on hand at the wall, with his preparations all made. The three horses were ready in charge of a faithful trooper, safely hidden in the shade of the trees, where a short run would bring the prisoner and his rescuers where they could mount and be off, with the speed of the wind. Teddy had not yet arrived, and Walter had begun to feel anxious, and fearful that he had deserted him, in spite of his protestations, when he heard a footfall and a rustling, and the face of his ally appeared, bearing an anxious look, while behind him followed a figure in a dark cloak. Walter was suspicious for a moment, and his hand stole rapidly to his breast and clasped the hilt of his dagger. The figure stole up to

him quickly, and flung back the hood that had concealed the face.

"Kate!" cried Walter, alarmed and happy at the same time. "You should not be here."

"Forgive me, dear friend," she pleaded, coming closely to him, and raising her glorious eyes to his face, while the light of a clouded moon showed the intense pleading in their depths. "I made Teddy tell me all. He would do anything for me, so you must not blame him. Promise me that you will not."

"You must return at once," said he, firmly, "for there may be danger here."

"Ah! that is why I came." She looked about her and saw that Teddy stood at some distance, with the ladder ready. He could not overhear. "Can you not guess why I am here? All day long I have been tormented; filled with a fear that you will endanger yourself in doing my bidding. I could not bear to think that danger might threaten you on my account. I have feared for your safety. Oh! if there is danger, draw back. I release you from your promise."

The young soldier listened to the loved voice with feelings he could not describe. She feared

for him. Her fear had caused her to come to his side though in the greatest danger to herself.

"It is my duty. The man, confined within those dark walls, is my friend—my companion since childhood. You have been misled by some fancied resemblance, and ere we part for—perhaps forever—I must tell you so."

"Forever! What do you mean?"

"Time is precious now, sweet one. I am not what I seem. I am what you call a rebel. Our ways lie far apart—yours in your happy home, mine in the deep forest and trackless swamp, with Marion and his men, a foe to those you hold dear. Farewell, before my heart breaks."

With a sudden and irresistible impulse he clasped her in a crushing embrace; kissed her once, twice, passionately, then rushed to the wall, raised the ladder against it, and was at the top. The ladder was lowered on the other side, and the pair disappeared.

Kate sank upon her knees on the soft grass as he released her, her brain in a whirl. Her face was a rosy red, and her breath came fast. He loved her. Her whole being seemed filled

with a tenderness as she felt his passionate kisses still warm upon her lips. That the prisoner was not Percy, she never thought of for an instant. Her whole soul was filled with her hero, and she could think of nothing else. "Forever," he had said. They must part forever. How little he knew a woman's heart. Her mind was made up, and she artfully smiled. Then she watched the house. Her whole soul now was wrapped up in a prayer for the safe return, from over that black wall, of the man she loved.

Meanwhile the two men had descended on the inside, and stopped for a moment to look about them. Speed was the principle object, for they feared little opposition when they once succeeded in gaining an entrance to the building.

"I suppose the door is the quickest way," said Walter. "We will attack that first."

"The do'r it is thin!" cried Teddy.

They sprang silently to the steps, and Walter examined the heavy woodwork.

"It will be no easy matter to break this in, and there is no other way," said Walter. "Fetch me the ladder. It is heavy, and will do the work."

Teddy brought it in a twinkling. They laid it down horizontally, and both, catching hold of the heavy piece of carpenter's work, used it as a battering ram. Once, twice, the blows resounded, and then the heavy lock gave way with a crash.

"Wait for me, here!" cried Walter, handing him his pistol, "and if help comes from the outside, hold them off if you can."

"The first shpalpeen that approaches, is a dead man!" cried the delighted Irishman, as he brandished the heavy weapon.

Walter leaped into the building, and through the long hallway. It was dark, and he was obliged to grope his way. He had nearly reached the end, when a door directly in front of him opened, and the sudden light from a candle nearly blinded him. It was Uri, who had been awakened by the crash, and was hurrying to see what was the trouble. He paused for an instant to gaze on the intruder, and then, quick as thought, he set the candle upon the floor and sprang at Walter, with a growl like that of a wild beast. As the gaunt giant came at him, Walter caught him firmly, in a wrestler's hold. His left

arm went about his waist, the left elbow forced beneath his chin, one knee planted on the stomach of his adversary. Down went Uri like a shot, half stunned, and in a twinkling Walter had turned him over, and had his hands pinioned behind his back with the aid of his silk handkerchief.

"Get up," he said, tersely.

The gaunt one obeyed, and eyed him savagely. Walter drew his dagger, and picked the candle from the floor, where it still flickered from the struggle that had taken place.

"Now show me where the prisoner is confined!"

Uri obeyed mechanically, the flash from the steel blade sending cold chills up his spine. He led the way up the stairs, and to the door with the slide.

"Here it is," he said, "shove the slide."

Walter did so, and threw the light of the candle into the room. It was empty.

"You have deceived me!" he cried. "He is not here."

Uri looked in, and uttered a curse.

"Here, this way!" he cried, his face dis-

torted with passion. The simple fellow suspected. He led Walter to Jessaline's room, and burst in the door with a kick. The occupants had already been aroused, and Henry was just drawing on his coat hastily as they entered. Jessaline had thrown on a wrapper and stood before him, her eyes blazing, her nostrils dilated with fear.

"What do you want here?" she cried.

"Walter!" cried Henry, advancing a step, and then hanging his head. Uri leaned his gaunt form against the wall, and eyed Henry with a glance in which death lurked.

"This is no time for explanations!" cried Walter. "We have no time to lose! Come!"

"Henry!" cried Jessaline, clinging to him. "You will not leave me? Do not go with him! I love you, oh! I love you. If I lose you, I die!"

She looked in his face and saw no hope for her there. Walter had recalled all the old ties. She flung herself in front of him and spread out her arms.

"You shall not take him, except over my dead body!"

Walter tried to force her aside, but she

fought like a tigress at bay over her cubs, and scratched with her nails, tearing at him with her teeth. Walter flung her loose, not unkindly.

“Farewell! Jessaline,” cried Henry, hoarsely. “And God forgive me for the wrong I have done you!”

The two young men sprang toward the door. Jessaline threw her arms above her head, and, uttering a piercing shriek, fell all in a heap on the floor, the rich, glossy hair covering her like a pall. Uri fell on his knees beside her, struggling with his bonds, and cursing her betrayer, while the rescuer and the rescued flew down the stairs, where Teddy awaited them at the door.

“Quick, quick!” he cried. “The red-coats, blast them! are coming on the other side. To the gate—it’s the only chance.”

They sprang to it, while the tramp of feet grew closer every moment, mingled with the clasp of arms and the hoarse voice of command. The gate was locked. Walter tore a gigantic stone from the side of the walk, that made him stagger under its weight. Gathering all his force, he hurled it at the heavy

plank, that crushed like so much egg-shell. They leaped through and were in the open air. Walter saw with terror that a cloaked figure sprang toward him. Kate had not returned home.

“My love,” she said, “you are safe.”

He shut his lips firmly, and caught her in his arms. The heads of a column of men appeared at the angle of the wall.

“Follow me!” he cried, and he sprang into the bushes, carrying Kate as though she were an infant, while her dear arms clasped his neck and her fragrant breath came in little delighted gasps, close to his cheek.

“My hero,” she whispered, and he felt that he could conquer an army for her dear sake.

They were pursued, but the horses were close at hand. They sprang into the saddles, Walter lifting his loved one lightly before him, and they tore off, followed by a few harmless scattering shots.

“You are a little rebel now!” cried Walter, joyously, while she clung to him, well satisfied. “Do you hate me for tearing you away from all your friends?”

“It is what I should have asked, You have

had my heart, and my hand goes with it. Where thou goest, I will go, where thou beest, I will be; my love, my king."

And Walter thanked Heaven for its gift of the choicest blessing that can be given to man. A true woman's heart, a true woman's love.



CHAPTER XXI.

FACE TO FACE.

The troop was soon joined, and a rest taken for a short time, from the rapid flight. The noble horses that had not faltered for an instant in the dash for liberty, were tethered in the shade of the forest, and plans were made at once as to where the troop was to move. Teddy was allowed, at his own request, to doff the coat that had been furnished by his majesty, and don a spare one belonging to a trooper, which he purchased from that individual with a piece of silver, bearing the head of that same hated sovereign. Walter led Kate to a seat on a camp stool, bade her rest for a while, and joined Henry at a little distance, where he was pacing feverishly, to and fro, in an agony of shame. He turned quickly, as Walter approached.

"How you must hate me," he began, not daring to look his old friend and companion in the face. "I feel that I am not worthy the

friendship of any man. My own conscience reproaches me, and I almost wish that one of those British bullets had ended my unwholesome existence."

"You are growing morbid," answered his friend. "Far be it from me to attempt either justification or censure. Man is but a beast at best, some of us of a fairer type than another, and temptation is seldom resisted, unless some loved presence is so near that the tempted one may fly to her for forgetfulness of the temptation, in the sweeter blessing of the reality."

"I should not have been so base," moaned Henry. "How will I ever dare to meet Ruth?"

"It is a little difficult. You must tell her all and at once, directly you see her. At least, do not live a lie. She may forgive you, or at least try to forget."

"The latter is the best I can expect. Where shall we go from here?"

"Directly home. I wish to place Kate under the care of our loved ones as soon as possible, for as soon as this excitement is over, she will

keenly feel her strained position, with only men about her. We must start at once."

"I think," said Henry, hesitatingly, "that I will only accompany you as far as the forks, and go first to my own place. It is growing late, and I do not feel equal to the task of confronting my sweet wife to-night, for I must tell her of my actions, and await her decree at once."

"As you please, but remember that I am with you always, and if it becomes necessary, will speak a word or two in your cause."

"I felt that you would!" cried Henry, clasping his friend's hand, "but do not let me detain you. You have an affair of the heart of your own to attend to, so speed it while you may. I will be near by as we travel."

Walter rejoined Kate at once. He had tried his best to get a saddle for her, but there were no farm houses or stables near by where one might be found, nor was there one in the troop, which carried no luggage of any consequence. The girl looked up with a happy smile as her lover approached her. He looked in vain for the lines of anxiety which he feared would begin to appear in her face.

"You are not angry with me?" he questioned.

"Angry—" she laughed, a sweet laugh, full of contentment. "Angry for taking me where my heart longed to go? No! I think not."

He bent and kissed her fondly, an act which caused Teddy, who chanced to be coming toward them, to dodge out of sight behind a tree.

"My queen," he whispered; then, after a delicious pause, "I could not procure you a saddle."

"Are you sure? Ah! I fear that is but a subterfuge, to be allowed to carry me again in your arms. I cannot permit it."

"What else can we do?"

"Nothing," she answered, smiling up at him, "so clasp me close again. Where are you taking me?" she asked with quaint simplicity, which showed implicit faith in him. She knew he had formed a good plan.

"To my own home, where you will be watched over as jealously as a hot-house flower, by the kindest father and the sweetest sister in the world."

She said no more, and Walter led out Tempest, sprang upon his back, and swung

her lightly before him, where he had strapped a soft blanket to make the seat more comfortable. Part of the troop had already gone on ahead, and the noble horse dashed off after them, scarcely heeding his double load.

Henry followed shortly after, feeling moody and disconsolate. His freedom did not give him the joy it would have given a man with a clearer conscience. It must be confessed, also, that there was a shadow of regret. He had not loved Jessaline, yet her spontaneous love had inspired him with a passion that men too often mistake for the finer quality. Passion is but a fever of the blood, love a higher attribute of the mind; and the two are as far removed from each other as the poles, yet how often are they confounded. He was angry with himself at what he termed his foible, and yet the loss of that same folly brought a yearning to his soul. He missed her, as the flower misses the thunder storm when it is passed. The experience has been refreshing, albeit terrible.

Gradually objects became familiar about him as he drew near roads that he had travelled before, and the immediate past began to

be blotted out in the memories of more familiar scenes. Gradually the day began to die, and the gloom of the east to drive into obscurity the last flickering rays of departing day. The stars came out dimly at first, and then grew brighter as the night wore on. He halted the troop for the night at a convenient spot, and continued his way. Walter, meantime, had left the main road, and taken his way, accompanied by Teddy and a chosen few of the troopers, to his house, where he felt a warm welcome was awaiting him and the sweet girl he was bringing to them, to be cared for until he should claim her as his own before the world.

The faint tint of a bluish green appearing over the tree tops showed that the moon was rising, and would soon throw its flood of light over slope, wood and swamp. Henry watched the queen of night as it rose slowly in the heavens, sometimes but partly obscured by a fleecy cloud, and then bursting out in full splendor before him. Often had he watched it rise over these same trees in his youth. He urged on his horse, and soon the walls of his home rose before him, standing out like a

medallion in the clear moonlight, with the dark background of the trees behind it. He reined up his steed, and gazed upon it long and tenderly. There had he passed his young manhood, some of the pleasantest days it were possible for one to have to remember. He walked his horse to the stable. No one was about, so he led him to his stall and turned him in. Then he made his way to the house. He knew its every nook and corner with his eyes shut. He would disturb no one, for he could open a window as he had often done when a boy, and go to his room unobserved. There was a light in his room in the upper story. The room he always used as a study and sitting room. It seemed strange to him that it should be lit up while he was absent. If company had come, certainly there were plenty of other rooms in the house in which to place them without using his own rooms, which usually were kept inviolate during his absence.

He took his way to a window that had often given him ingress during his younger days, and opened a clasp knife that he carried, having procured it from one of his troop di-

rectly upon his release. He thrust the blade in the crack, lifted a catch, swung the sash open, and entered noiselessly. The light of the moon showed the interior plainly, and, even had it not been there to assist him, he would have been little troubled in finding his way about, for the position of every object was printed indelibly upon his memory. He closed the window carefully, and paused for a moment to look about him. How little had he expected ever to see the old walls again, and yet here he was, transported as if by magic from his prison to his home.

He opened the door and went silently up the stairway, pausing for an instant before the door to his room. Surely there was a light behind the door, yet he heard no noise. There could be no one there. He listened for quite a while, but no sound came to him. Perhaps a candle had been left burning there by some of the help. At least it would do no harm to see. He wanted to be alone, to think, and no place would be like his own room for that purpose. He paused for another moment, irresolute, and then lifted the latch and pushed the door gently open.

Hardly had he stepped into the room before he was aware that it already had an occupant, for a man rose suddenly from the chair in which he had been sitting, and stood facing him, his back toward the light, and even as he did so, Henry noticed that he held a pistol in his hand. He had thrown his coat over the back of a chair, and stood in his waistcoat.

"You seemed to expect some one," said Henry, calmly, pointing to the weapon. "May I ask whom?"

The other did not speak, seeming to be turned to stone, either from terror, or some other deep feeling. Then the pistol slipped from his grasp, and fell to the floor. Henry sprang to it at once, and placed his foot upon it. The other did not seem to heed the importance of the movement, but remained like one spellbound.

"You do not seem in haste to answer my question," insisted Henry, mockingly.

"In Heaven's name! sir," said the other, in a voice filled with awe, "tell me who you are."

"With pleasure, since I now hold the key to the situation. I am Henry Carter, owner of

Delside, a captain of a troop under Marion! Now, who are you?"

The unknown kept his face well in the shadow, and pointed to the table where a sheet of paper lay, the ink upon its surface still wet with recent writing.

"Will you kindly read that?" he said, in a voice that trembled with emotion. "It will explain more than I can tell you by word of mouth."

Henry stepped to the other side of the table, first securing the firearm, to guard against any trick that the other might have in mind, picked up the paper, and read:

DEAR FRIENDS ALL:

I write this short note to you, hoping that after it is read, I may find forgiveness in the hearts of those who have been so kind to me, for the rash act I am now about to commit. Ever since you took me in, sick and near unto death, nursing me back to life and reason, I have been sensible of the debt I owe you, but something tells me that there is that in my life which my lost memory can never recall. Events have happened of late which make it better that I should cease to exist, for with each day of my life comes only added agony. You will say that my wound has crazed my brain. Well, be it so. My hand now commands the bullet that shall send me into the great unknown. God forgive me. Farewell all and Heaven bless you.

HENRY CARTER.

"What devil's scheme is this?" cried Henry,

dashing the sheet down upon the table, and advancing a step toward the other, who stood with arms folded, the light falling full upon his pale, set features.

“My God!”

The exclamation burst from Henry as he recoiled from the man as if he had seen a ghost. What trickery was being worked upon him? The man he gazed upon wore some of his own clothes, and had his own features—almost part for part. As they stood thus, a third party might easily have detected the dissimilarities. Henry's face was fuller than that of the other, and the hair was of a bluer black and not as curly. His brows also were heavier and not so finely penciled, the eyes themselves being hardly as large and full of expression. He was, in fact, a grosser type of the same man.

“You notice it, too, do you not?” said the other, in slow, measured tones. “Then I am not dreaming. *You* are Henry Carter; thank Heaven for that! *but who, in Heaven's name, am I?*”

“You were about to take your life, if this

letter is to be believed," said Henry, bewildered, "and under my name! Why so?"

"They told me that I was Henry Carter when they took me in, dying from a wound in my head, and brought me back to life, all but my memory, which has forever fled. I believed them. How could I do otherwise? I see now why they made the mistake."

A sudden fear came over Henry as the other spoke. There was truth in his voice, in his every word. If he had been taken for himself, how had it been with Ruth, his wronged wife? Had Heaven sent this to him as a punishment for his folly?"

"And Ruth—my wife!" he cried, hoarsely; "did she believe as the rest?"

"My God! do not think that for a moment. They never told me of—of my supposed wife until I had learned to love another. She is as inviolate as when you left her."

"Thank God! Thank God!" cried Henry, fervently.

"If you believe me," said the unknown, after a pause, "there is no need to prolong this. Give me another room until the morning,

when we can go together, and set matters right."

"Keep the room," said Henry. "I do believe you, and will do all in my power to help you find your identity, but no more thoughts of this," pointing to the pistol.

"No! that is all over," with a sad little smile. "A new world opens before me now."

The two men parted, Henry holding out a friendly hand, which the unknown grasped with an honest pressure, the former to seek a bed in his own house, the other to pace the floor restlessly until the first faint streaks of morning dawned, and the candle sputtered in its socket. Gradually a new light came to his eyes, and the color to his cheeks. The past was dying with the night, and with the morn came hope of a future filled with love and promise, with the bright, beautiful face of Eloise as the guiding star.

He had lost a name, and found love, and the right to love, in return.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LOST IS FOUND.

Walter made such great haste with his fair burden that the night was not far advanced when he drew in sight of the dear old plantation, and heard the subdued songs of the negroes in their quarters while they enjoyed themselves before going to rest. He had outstripped the balance of the party in his haste to arrive before his people had retired for the night, and as he drew rein before the door, even Tempest, that intrepid steed, felt the effects of his hard drive and double load, breathing heavily, while his widely-opened nostrils were foam-flecked. He arched his neck proudly, however, as Kate patted his muscular neck, and spoke to him in words of praise. It seemed as if the noble brute understood her perfectly. The sound of their approach had been heard within the house, for now the door opened, and Roger appeared on

the threshold, shading his eyes with his hand.

"It's only me! father," cried Walter.

"My son!" gasped the old man. "Now the good God be praised!" and he ran out and clasped his dear boy in his arms.

"Softly, father, softly. You see I bring a prisoner," said his son, laughing, and taking Kate's hand, he led her forward, where the full light of the moon fell upon her bounteous beauty.

"Bless my soul!" cried Roger, who was as much an admirer of female beauty as any young man of his day. "You do not mean to have me believe that you have turned pirate, and are carrying off maidens as prisoners."

"As willing prisoners, sir," said Kate, hanging her head, to hide the surging blush. What would the young man's people think of her rash act? Still she did not repent, for Walter was near her, and beneath his strength and love was absolute safety and happiness. "Tell him, Walter."

"This young lady," said Walter, his voice tremulous with a sweet earnestness, "is to be the future Mrs. Fuller, and your second

daughter." The name struck Kate at once. He had deceived her then, that other time. She looked at him reproachfully, and he flushed a little.

Roger opened his heart and arms to her at once.

"Welcome! thrice welcome!" he cried, kissing her pure brow. "Both for the sake of my son, and that of your own pure face."

The heart of the girl warmed to him at once. She felt the kindly influence that he ever excited, and trusted him from that moment.

"I know I shall love you," she whispered, as she returned his caress.

"Bless you! my dear," was his answer. "But come in at once, for they will all be enraptured to see you."

Walter, of course, was received with a perfect flood of joy, and Kate could hardly complain of her welcome. It was enough that Walter loved her, to have her taken at once to the hearts of that little household. Eloise claimed her as her special charge, and as the poor girl was painfully fatigued with her hard ride, she carried her off in triumph to her own

room, where she assisted her to disrobe, loaned her a night robe, and saw her safely to her own bed, before she began to prepare her own toilet.

"You are so beautiful," she said. "I do not wonder that Walter lost his heart to you."

"How can you speak of beauty, when your glass has such a sweet tale to tell. We are to love each other, very dearly, are we not?"

"Yes, dear, kiss me."

"Oh! it is so sweet to love. Have you ever known what it is?"

Eloise turned pale.

"Perhaps," she sighed, and thought of Henry.

Meantime Walter had been busy answering questions down stairs, but had resolved to say nothing about Henry but let him arrive and give his own surprise. At the same time he thought it strange that they did not ask in regard to his whereabouts or welfare. They, in turn, did not wish to mar the pleasure of his return by a recital of the sufferings of the supposed Henry, so put off the evil hour for the morrow. At a late hour Walter repaired to

his bed, as happy as a man can well be, and dreamed of Kate, love and happiness.

The next morning, after breakfast was over, they were all gathered in the sitting-room, the windows opened wide to admit of the cool autumn breeze. Kate was seated, running her fingers lightly over the harpsichord. She was an excellent musician, and loved to play upon the instrument, yet now her heart was filled with other matters. Walter bent over her lovingly, while Eloise sat near, and looked upon them tenderly, yet with a pain at her heart. Roger and Ruth were engaged in a battle with chess, that had begun the previous evening, and was soon at the height of interest. The battle was soon ended, however, for with a face beaming with triumph, the old man made a move, and called "checkmate."

"You have me," said Ruth. "And I thought I had you with my queen. Well, I will play more carefully next time."

Roger bent toward her.

"Had we not better tell Walter now about Henry?" he asked.

"If you wish," she said, after thinking for a few moments. "We had best have it over

with. It will cause him great sorrow, that his old companion will not know him."

They called over to them, and he drew a chair near, and sat down. He saw that something troubled them and wondered what it could be. Kate looked across the room and smiled at him as she arose and took a seat by the side of Eloise. He smiled back, his eyes filled with love. Then he waited for his father to speak.

"We have not yet told you of Henry," said his father. "We have sad things to tell you of him, which we preferred to let rest until to-day."

"Yes," said Walter, looking alarmed. "Is it anything serious? I hardly comprehend."

Then his father told him the whole story. How the young man had fallen, wounded, at their very door; of his loss of memory; forgetting everything, even the closest ties. How Dr. Mitchell had been certain that when he was confronted by faces with which he had been familiar in his youth, he would return to his former self, and how fearfully they had been disappointed.

While his father spoke, Walter's face was a

study. He looked at Ruth, and saw by her expression that his father was serious. Wonder was depicted on his every feature. Eloise and Kate arose and strolled out of the house, but he did not notice them. He wondered if he was in a dream. The story seemed incredible. When his father had finished, he remained silent for quite a time.

“Your story is a strange one,” he said, slowly. “All the more so, when I tell you that it is but yesterday that I rescued Henry, in person, from a Charleston prison, and that he was with us a part of the way. You can imagine, therefore, how your story affects me.”

His father stared with astonishment, and Ruth seemed ready to faint. That undefined suspicion seemed to assume a shape, at last. She tried to speak, but the sound of hoofs at the front of the house drowned her voice. She grasped the back of her chair as she stood, and swayed as she gazed, as if fascinated at the open doorway. They followed her look, and read the explanation of the mystery as readily as she did.

Followed by Cæsar and a half dozen of the

hands at Delside, came the two young men, Henry and the unknown. Side by side they advanced into the room, the clear dissimilarity between them apparent as they stood in the bright light of that autumn morning, almost as a reproach to those who had made the fearful mistake. They stood there for a moment, and then the true Henry caught sight of Ruth. She saw him, and the whole of her doubting, earnest heart went out to him. There was no mistake now, and she rushed into his arms, and clasped him close.

“My husband!” she exclaimed.

And Henry, forgetting all in that loved embrace, held her close and kissed the pure lips. She was his to love and to cherish. What an escape they had. It made him shudder for a moment. Then Roger greeted him heartily.

“We have made a mistake, my boy,” he said, “due, probably, to an excess of zeal.”

The unknown stood with folded arms, looking upon them all. He gazed about him for the one presence that he cared for now, and not seeing it, became thoughtful. He was in the way now, he felt, and should make the

necessary excuses and bid them adieu. He was nothing to them. He advanced a step toward them, and spoke coldly:

"I trust that Mr. Carter is satisfied of my honesty," he said. "There can be no need of my remaining longer to trouble you. I thank you all for what you have done for me, and bid you an adieu."

"Stop! young man," cried Roger, "we do not do things in that way here. You are alone and unknown. You know not where are your friends, nor who they are. Remain with us until they are found."

The unknown shook his head.

"I could not think of troubling you," he said.

"Let me add my entreaties!" said Walter, impulsively, extending his hand and clasping that of the other in a hearty grasp. "Let me be your brother."

The young man appeared much moved, and brushed away a tear that had gathered in his eye. With arms clasped about each other Kate and Eloise entered by the window. They were a pretty pair. The eyes of the unknown filled with a soft light, and then blazed.

Eloise looked upon the two young men, and staggered to a chair, her brain in a whirl. Kate looked from one to the other, and then, with a glad cry, she rushed upon the unknown and clasped her arms about his neck, while she kissed him on the white forehead.

“Percy, oh, Percy!” she cried, “found at last.”

Eloise started up, her heart filled with a jealous fear, and fled from the room. Walter looked savage, and looked as if about to spring upon the young man, when he remembered her story of this same Percy Taylor, and how she had come to the new world to find him. He knew now why she had thought Henry was he, when they saw him at the window in Charleston.

Kate drew him forward by the hand, not noticing the look of agony that convulsed his face, as the mental struggle was taking place. Suddenly he threw up his hands, with a glad cry.

“Kate!” he cried; “Kate Haven! My little chum. My dear friend! Thank God! I remember! I know all now! *I am no longer an un-*

known! I am Percy Taylor, of Rockfern, Cheshire, England!"

"Taylor, of Rockfern!" cried Henry, his face beaming. "Taylor was my mother's name, and her brother, Colonel Gray Percival Taylor, of Rockfern. Percy, you are my cousin."

Percy's eyes were beaming. It all had come so suddenly. The mists had cleared away from the past, and the once clouded brain now reasoned clearly. No longer was the world to be dark and dreary for him, for here were friends and loved ones about him in profusion.

"How came you here?" he cried, looking at the young girl with a happy smile.

"I came after you. When we received your letter that you had left for the colonies, I came after you, with Captain and Mrs. Strong. Bless their dear hearts! I suppose they are thinking all manner of dreadful things about me."

"But how came you here?" insisted Percy, bewildered.

"Walter," she cried, blushing, "why don't you answer the young man?"

"So I will, dear. It's very simple. I just stole her from Mr. and Mrs. Captain Strong."

“Ah! I see,” said Percy. “So my fair Kate has found her master. I say, Kate, what if we had obeyed the governor’s commands? I rather think it would have knocked out all this.”

“Are you not ashamed of yourself?” she replied.

“Where is Eloise?” asked her father.

He had missed her, as well as Percy, who had been looking about the room in search of the dear face, for some moments.

“I think I know sir,” cried Percy, “and as Ruth and Henry seem occupied, and Walter here will have his hands full with Kate, which he certainly will, if he expects to hold up his end of the conversation, I will go and find her myself.”

As he passed out of the door, going toward the brookside, he heard Aunt Kitty say to Cæsar:

“I done tole you, ole man, ’bout dat ar mole, undah de ear. Massa Henry, he hab it shuah, but dis gemman ain’t got none. I tole yo’ so fo’ shuah.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MAN AND THE MAID.

When Percy passed out of the house on to the lawn, he looked about him with the air of a man who had conquered the world, and found happiness in the strife. How few people know the value of such a small thing as memory. He had lost it for a time, and the agony he had endured had been terrible. That mixture of doubt and fear had followed him each day, and made life unbearable. Then had come the knowledge that he was wedded to Ruth, and the world seemed dead to him. He laughed aloud, now, as he looked up at the blue sky, the spreading forest, the rustling trees, and felt the cool morning wind upon his face. He had found himself. The song says: "Memory is the only friend that grief can call its own." With him, memory had given him a future. A future that, when he paused to think of it, made his heart beat fast, and his

pulse quicken at the thought. He had given up Eloise, in his inmost heart, and it had been that, which had almost brought him to the point of putting an end to his existence the night before. How near are we to happiness sometimes, when we wearily throw down our cross, and give up the struggle of life in despair. He shuddered as he thought how near he had been to giving up.

How well he knew where to find her, the maid of his heart. Where would she be but at the trysting place? Where, but by the brook, where she had driven him from her on that day when he would have told her of his love? He could see it all over again. Her averted face, that only showed the tips of the ears and the full round neck, each flushed, as she sent him from her. Then the ride together, when she had escaped such a fearful fate. He remembered her every look and gesture. He might have doubted, but that he recalled that fearful look of despair upon her face as she rose to face and repel him, her little hands working nervously, when he had confessed his love. Ah! she loved him! He was sure of it, and he quickened his step as he picked his way over

the moss and stones to the shady nook he would never forget. That spot, and that only, should be the place for their union of heart to heart.

As for Eloise, she had fled from the house at the instant Kate had flung herself upon Percy's neck. She had understood in a moment the story that the likeness, the two young men bore to each other, told, and for one moment a great wave of happiness had surged up over her heart, and filled her whole being. He was not Ruth's. She had no claim on him. The revulsion of feeling nearly took her breath away; and then—then, Kate had flung herself into his arms. Her whole jealous nature was up in arms in an instant, in a battle with pride. With a heart that pained her as if it would break, she had left the room as quickly as her almost tottering limbs would carry her. Out in the air, she felt revived, and with a quick instinct she made direct for her little retreat, where she might be alone in her misery.

It was true that Kate, to whom she had taken a strong fancy, had professed almost passionate adoration for her brother, yet how did she know but what there was already a bond be-

tween these two—the man she loved so fondly and the sweet girl she had been so prepared to take to her heart. She flung herself on the seat, which he had called her throne, and gave way to a burst of grief. She knew now why she had grown to love the supposed Henry so well. The affection she had felt for Ruth's husband had been but little more than a ripened friendship. For this man her whole heart had gone forth, though against her bidding. She had often wondered why her love could have increased for a man, when he had become another's, and the mystery was explained. But he did not love her—the other had all his affection. Had she not seen the expression on his face when he saw her?

She heard a faint sound in the thicket. She sprang lightly to her feet, for she was all nerves to-day. Her eyes blazed. Could it be? Her breath came fast and she pressed her hand to her heart as if to still its wild beating. Then a form sprang from the bushes which it thrust impatiently apart, and stood on the edge of the little brook that gurgled past, laughing at them, even as he had done that other time when she had driven him from her. Her heart

seemed to urge her to reach out her arms to him, but she was a woman, and remained an enigma for the honor of her sex. Her features seemed to freeze, as she saw his laughing face. How improved he looked. Something had changed him wonderfully. There was more soul expressed in his large eyes.

“Ah! truant, I have found you,” he cried, and the next instant he had bounded over the brook, and was hastening towards her. In his eagerness he had not noticed her coldness. His brain had been filled but with one idea: to seek her out and take her to his heart at once. He had not figured that he would be obliged to win her first. This had never entered his head for a moment. He was free to win her; she was all in all to him, and he had not had time to argue with himself.

She did not seat herself this time, but stood leaning a hand against the trunk of a tree, her eyes turned everywhere except upon his face. She would not dare to face him, fearing for her own weakness. His eyes were magnetic to her, and she dared not trust her own.

“Why did you come here?” she asked, so coldly that he started and gazed at her closely

“Why should I not seek you out?” he said, trying to calm his passion, and speak in a modulated voice, which trembled in spite of him.

“There were others to claim your attention at the house,” looking toward him scornfully, for just an instant. “It would have been better had you remained with them. *They*, at least, would have amused you.

He gazed at her, fixedly. Why was she so cold now? Was there something in the air of this spot which made her so, for so she had been to him that other time? He grew impatient and half angry.

“Why should we be at cross purposes? You know why I have come here. Why are you so cold to me?”

“One would think,” she answered, with a slight curl of her lip, “that you were anxious to have all womankind *warm* toward you. I prefer to be excluded from the common herd. I am odd in my tastes, perhaps, but I do not like to divide my—my——”

“Well, your what, for instance?” for she had hesitated, as if a word had come that she regretted.

"On second thought, I prefer not to state," she answered, and seating herself at last, for she was wearied, she gazed off into space. He came close to her, and resting his hand against the tree above her head, looked down upon her as she turned her face away.

"You are acting strangely," he said, "and not like yourself. You remember what I confessed to you on that dreadful day, that will ever live in my memory. You knew, even before that, that I loved you. That feeling has grown only the more intense with the return of memory which makes the world once more bright and beautiful, and full of great possibilities. Why do you make it so hard for me to tell you that I love you.

She tried to look scornfully at him, but in spite of herself she was obliged to turn away her head, that his earnest gaze might not detect the color upon her face. She was almost tempted to throw herself into his arms, but to-day she was strangely perverse. She would not be lightly won, and then how did she know but what there *had been* something between him and Kate. It might be past now, but she felt jealous of even his past.

"Why should you tell me?" she asked, coldly, this time looking him fairly in the eye, without flinching. "Think of something more interesting if you care to talk to me at all. Why should I trouble myself with your love affairs? Besides, to judge from your actions a short time ago, there is another who has fully as good, if not a better claim upon you than any other could have."

"Who, Kate?" he said, a sudden light breaking in upon him. "Are you jealous of her? Of the girl who has been my childhood's playmate and manhood's friend? What a silly little girl!"

He came closer and took one of the cold little hands in both his own, as she turned her face from him. He pressed it lightly to his lips, the fingers making a slight effort to escape as he did so.

"Oh! my sweetheart, can you not understand me? There is nothing in the wide world that appears beautiful to me, but you. The sun, the moon, the stars, this brilliant day that seems to smile upon all nature to bless me with the gladness of awakened memory, and budding hopes for the future, becomes but second

thought to me when I think of the dear girl I love, for without her all would be darkness, and life not worth the living. Oh! my love, let that light shine upon me always. Let me bask in the sunshine of your bright face, and have the blessing of your presence through all time. Love, be my wife!"

He bent toward her, passionately, until his lips, as she drew away, nearly touched the pink, shell-like ear. Her eyes shown like twin stars, and her lips parted in an ecstasy, while the tree trunks in the forest edge seemed to be dancing a merry dance before her, yet she was perverse. She would make him suffer a little for that caress he had given to Kate. Yet she knew now that he loved her, and her alone. There was truth in his voice, and her heart answered him though her lips did not.

"You hurt my hand," she said in a low voice, as he awaited her answer, not looking toward him.

He dropped it at once, and his whole manner seemed to freeze. He drew himself up and looked at her scornfully, but the look was lost upon her, for he did not turn when he spoke.

"I appear to be out of place here," he said,

coldly, "and had better leave you to yourself. It seems that I have been mistaken in my idea that I had found favor in your sight. Well, it is not the first time a man has made a mistake of this kind. This way is mine," waving his hand across the brook that rippled merrily up at him as if in mockery, "and your way is another. Here our paths part, and I pray God we may never meet again."

She started at his words. *Never to meet again.* Oh! She had not meant that. Oh, no! no! She turned quickly, and saw that he had already gained the opposite bank. What if he should go and leave her forever? She sprung to the brook's side, her whole soul showing in her eager glance.

"Henry!—no, no, Percy!" she cried, wildly. "Come back—*come back to me!*"

He turned suddenly, and saw her standing thus, with her hands outstretched across the little stream. The words had pierced him like an arrow, and set his heart on fire, for in the tone he read love and fear. Love for him, and fear that she would lose him. Nevertheless he remained cold. She should not treat him so with impunity.

"What can I do for you?" he said. "Why should I come back to be tortured by a coquette?"

"Oh no! not that; truly not a coquette!" she cried, piteously. "Do not be unjust. You are so, so hasty. Now do come over the brook."

"Not a step!" he cried, "until I have your answer. Oh, I am in a safe place to treat with mine enemy now. Come; is it yes or no?"

"Yes or no, to what." with an attempt at evasion.

"You know well enough. Will you be my wife?"

She flung out her arms to him while the glad blushes came to the fair cheeks.

"Yes, yes!" she cried, "with all my heart."

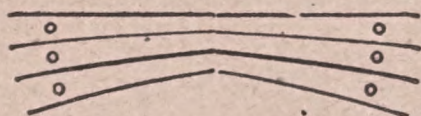
The next moment he had leaped the brook, caught her up in his arms, and, covering her face and lips with kisses while she panted happily in his embrace, seated her on her throne, and was on his knees beside her with his arm about her waist.

"Mine at last!" he cried.

"No, not at last, dear love," she said, clasping her arms about his neck, and kissing him fondly of her own accord. "I have loved you

always. This love of mine has been the joy and terror of my life this many weeks."

"But only the joy in future, my love, if the love of man can make it so."



CHAPTER XXIV.

A DOUBLE TRAGEDY.

Ralph Pepper had been astonished upon his arrival at Charleston, after having, as he supposed, seen Carter with the young ladies upon the lawn, to find that the young man was still a prisoner as he had left him, and after remaining but a short time, during which he was particular to admonish Uri, with many terrible scowls by way of making himself impressive, to take particular care that his charge did not escape. Then he set about meditating some plan by which to revenge himself upon Ruth. It is true that he had loved the girl as much as his dark, fierce nature was capable, which was very little indeed. Love from him was confined chiefly to passion, and would be hot and cold by turns under the best of conditions. Revenge was more in his line, and he resolved upon having that in some way or other.

He knew now that something was wrong

at the plantation. This man, with the wonderful likeness to the prisoner, had usurped his place, so must be as wicked as himself, and would work with him probably. He laughed to himself as he thought of the trouble he would yet make them all. He felt that he was hardly capable of planning as he would wish, alone. He must have some one to advise with, and no one could be better than his tool, and Henry's jailor, old Dan Giles. The old man had been away on some smuggling expedition or other, but must have returned by this time. Ralph, therefore, made his way toward the house that he had transformed into a prison. His thoughts on the way were the most jubilant. He had the proud girl under his thumb, where he could wound her, and make the wound hurt.

Busy with his thoughts he passed about the angle of the wall, and gave a quick curse of surprise as he noticed that the gate in the wall was shattered, and the remnant swinging open. He quickened his pace, and found that the door flew open at his touch. Then he saw that the lock had been forced in. With a yell of rage, he sprang into the hallway, and was

confronted by Uri, whose eyes shone like those of a basilisk. The excitement of events was fast unseating what poor, little wits he had left. Pepper caught him by the shoulder and hissed out:

“Where is the prisoner?”

Uri did not answer, but extended his arms in that suggestive manner, that told plainer than words, that he had escaped.

“Curse you all! How did it happen?” he growled, fixing Uri, with one of his deepest scowls.

“They broke in,” answered the giant, his eyes moving restlessly, “and made me show them where the prison room was—but he wasn’t there.”

“Wasn’t there! What do you mean?”

The giant pointed his finger overhead, and a sob shook his huge frame.

“Well, well, what?” cried Pepper.

“Her lover.”

“What—Jessaline? I never would have thought it. Where will we find passion next?”

“She loved him,” said Uri, weeping cop-

iously, unable to get that one idea out of his head.

“More fool she,” said Pepper. “There, stop your pumping, and wait for me down here.”

The Tory mounted the stairs softly, and knocked at the door of the chamber. A cold voice that spoke despair answered his tap, and he pushed the door open. The room was in disorder, as if a tragedy had recently happened there. The girl herself was crouched upon the floor by the fireplace, where she had been for a long while, almost since she had come to herself. Upon regaining consciousness, the first thing that had attracted her attention was the dagger, that Walter had dropped in his haste to get his friend away. Its bright blade seemed to interest her, and after her sobs had ceased, she had took to gazing upon it tenderly. Why should she care to live now that her love was gone? He had taught her what life was; and without him she could not live. How easy it would be to plunge the sharp blade into her breast. He had often kissed her there in the happy weeks that had just passed. She would not live without him.

As Pepper entered, she hid the little weapon

in her bosom. She did not wish him to read her thoughts. She looked up at him a little vacantly, and waited wearily for him to speak. She longed to be alone again. Alone with her thoughts.

Ralph looked down upon her, and the new idea that he had framed down stairs surged through his brain with redoubled force. How beautiful she was. She had flung herself down in the most careless abandon, and he saw that she was clad in only a wrapper. Her beautiful dark hair hung about her, only seeming to heighten the effect of her splendid form by what it concealed. One full, round limb showed, where the robe had been drawn aside, and the black face of the man turned from pale to crimson as he looked down upon her. What a superior woman she was, and he had never noticed it before. Was it because this other man had given her a soul, that now glowed through her whole body? How he hated that other, who had possessed her first.

"So our prisoner has escaped," he began, in a voice that appeared kindly, for him.

"Yes."

"How long ago, do you think?"

"Oh! ages, ages, it seems to me. But perhaps after all it is not so long, for it was but last night. This is the morning."

"You seem to feel more badly over it than I do," he said, jealously.

"Why should I not?" she said, simply opening her eyes and looking at him astonished. "He was all in all to me. He brought me life into this dark hole, and taught me how to live, and love."

"You speak warmly," said he, biting his lip to keep down his swelling passion.

"He was my lover."

"My God! young lady, you show little shame."

"Shame!" she laughed, recklessly, "who speaks of shame? I am proud that he was mine. Oh! if he would but come again, I would take him before you all."

"You know that he has a wife, do you not?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Yes, of course."

"That he loves her dearly?"

"He loves me!" she cried, springing to her feet and throwing back the long hair, while her breast heaved with passion. "Why do you

torment me thus? Am I not in misery enough? Do you take any satisfaction in watching the suffering of a woman whose heart is broken?"

"You mistake me!" he cried, his dark face glowing, as he came a step nearer to her. "I came to console you."

"Console me? Now you mock me. I can never be consoled, for I have lost that which I can never regain. He is gone forever."

"Listen! Jessaline," he cried, his passion breaking beyond all bounds. "You are young and do not know the world and life, as I do. This young man has come to you, and, as you were at an impressionable age, his magnetism has opened your heart to your true womanhood. You feel badly now because of this new passion with which he has inspired you—as you think—forever. Foolish girl, do you not know that men are men, and that is all. What you have felt for that man you can feel for others—for one who will fill your soul with the same blissful passion. Dry your tears, therefore, and resolve to live again, for the world is still bright and filled with love for you, if you but stretch out your hand to grasp it."

"What do you mean?" she asked, a vague

fear coming over her, more at his manner than his words.

“Your soul misses something. Let me find for you what you have lost. That mystical something that no tongue can define. What place better than this, in which to learn your sweet tale of love, what time better than the present?”

He shut the door to the room, his hands trembling as he did so, while she retreated from him slightly, her eyes flashing scorn and resentment. He started to come toward her.

“Stop!” she cried, extending an arm toward him, with a gesture like a queen. “You, who profane the hallowed name of love! You, like the rest of your mean-spirited world, look upon me as careless, because I have not been bound by mythical chains to the man I have given my love and all else beside. Your world would sanction the most horrible mating of two souls, without a spark of love, because of a pretended holy vow. Shall I tell you what I think of women who sell themselves to men, lawfully, without love, I, whom you think so base? That in the sight of Heaven, such women will be branded as wantons, while I

am held blameless. You try to tell me that all men are alike, because to such women, so they are—first come, first served—but to me, there is but one, and he is the man I love. Come sorrow, come agony, come death, no other shall ever be to me what he has been, no other shall ever usurp his place. Let the poor, self-educated, weak woman, give you a lesson in love, as God had intended it. One for one, not one for many.”

“There is no use in your resisting, Jessaline!” he cried, throwing prudence to the winds, and allowing his passion full sway, while he advanced slowly toward her, his two eyes blazing, like living coals, the whites turned suddenly bloodshot. “Your apparent constancy only makes you the more desirable, and I will clasp that dainty form of yours in my arms, and be master of my own wishes. After you learn that passion is with us all, you will learn to like me as well as the other.”

He followed her closely, and she retreated slowly toward the curtains. They neither spoke, but kept their eyes fastened upon each other, his fiery, her's cold and determined. She retreated backward as he pressed on until

the curtains were reached. Then she stood by the side of the bed, where the impression of Henry's head still showed in the pillows. She saw it, and trembled a little. She would never see him again. She stood with the back of her limbs against the bed, looking fixedly at him; he so wild that he sprang for her while the blood rushed to his temples. His hand touched her, and she uttered a shriek as if his touch had polluted her. A flash came before his eyes. It was the blade of a dagger. He started back, only to see a bright stream spurt from the white neck, over the marble bust. She sank down and her life blood dyed the white awnings of the bed.

"Good-by, Henry," she gasped, her face lighting up with a smile. "'Tis where I would wish to die, here where we loved. I—am—true—to—" That was all.

Hardly had the voice ceased when there was a crash at the door and Uri, his eyes blazing and his hair flying, burst into the room. He took in the whole scene at a glance. He saw the white figure and the veil of hair, dyed with her own blood; saw Ralph standing like a statue of horror gazing at the girl and he

uttered a shriek like some wild beast, and hurled himself upon the Tory.

“Devil—devil—” he cried. “You have killed her,” and he caught him about his body with a grip of iron, pinioning his arms to his side.

The sight had driven his poor brain stark mad. His wild eyes blazed into those of Ralph for an instant, then with a growl, he shook him and caught the side of his neck with his teeth. The huge jaws met, and there was a gurgling sound, a stifled shriek, then a few moments later, a heavy fall upon the floor. Uri looked about him for a moment, then with a shrill, wild laugh tore from the house like a demon, his lips dripping blood.

Up stairs there was silence everywhere. The day wore on, the bodies never moved.

A little mouse stuck out his head from behind the fireplace, and then scampered over the carpet.

It was the only living thing in that house.

CHAPTER XXV.

FORGIVENESS AND THE END.

There was probably not a happier man in the whole wide world, than Roger Fuller. He had taken a great fancy to Kate, and complimented his son in the highest terms upon his choice. She was British, of course, but then she was a woman, and they were supposed to be non-combatants. Then he was certain that she loved his dear boy. There was no mistaking that fact, and the two were so happy together that his heart warmed to the stranger at once. They were so well suited to each other; he lively and jocose, she, now that the excitement had passed, ready to bandy saucy repartee with him. They never tired of each other's society for a moment, and if one was out of the others sight, there was a restlessness manifest, and then the other was hunted up.

The two young men obtained a leave of absence for a short time, as war matters were

not particularly pressing just then, and they made the most of the time allowed them, though Henry returned to his command before his allotted time had expired, for reasons which had to deal with Ruth. He had taken Walter's advice, and resolved to tell her all. It was a hard matter for him, for she seemed so happy at his return, so thoroughly content to be with him that he hated to speak the words that should make the look of pain come to her face. She was of so honest a disposition herself, that he felt it would be hard for her to forgive him. How he cursed that weakness which had led him to be false to her. However he nerved himself to the task and told her all, without reservation. Nor did he try to spare himself, for he was just enough angry with his past, to give himself as much the worst of it as possible.

She heard him through and then there was silence. He noticed that her face had turned pale, and he saw a tear glisten in the lashes. Her face had been averted while he told her of his baseness, yet she gave no sign, other than a quick catching of the breath as the whole horror of the affair came upon her. He stood

over her chair, awaiting the verdict with a beating heart. She could not help remembering that he had left her a bride, even before the first evening of their first day of wedded bliss had passed into night, and had gone almost straight to the arms of another. No, she could never forgive him. Hereafter their lives must lie apart. *She* never would have yielded to any temptation that would have made her false to him. He had done this thing once, and might do so again. Surely he did not love her.

She told him so, coldly. It seemed as if he had killed her heart during that short recital. He had made his bed though and must lie upon it. She told him so, and saw the look of agony and despair that came over his face, yet she felt no sorrow at the sight. She was glad if he suffered a little, for surely she must not bear all the pain:

He left her without a word. Perhaps he had deserved it, but it seemed hard to him. The rest were so happy, why should he be singled out to bear the misery for them all? He went home to Delside, remained there a few days and then joined his troop, flinging himself

into the war with a fervor with which he tried to breed forgetfulness. Ruth grew a little paler but remained firm; in vain her friends pleaded with her to forgive her husband. She was unforgiving, and it seemed as if these two lives were a failure.

Percy brought Eloise, blushing and happy before her father, and asked him for her hand. The old man was so happy to see the smiles back again in the face of his darling that he was prepared to agree to almost anything, but stopped to temporize. He insisted that no British subject should carry his daughter off to England, with his consent. If she was to be married, her husband must agree to take up with the fortunes of the colonies, and be an American. This was not such a hard thing to bring his mind to, for he had cared little for the war and had no very thoroughly established political principles. He agreed to settle down as near her old home as he could locate, and as the old gentleman had already formed an attachment for him for his own sake, the rest was easily arranged, and the young couple made supremely happy by the promise that they should have the paternal blessing.

After some time had elapsed, Percy received a letter from England, written by his father's solicitor. The old warrior had died it seemed, unforgiving, for he had left no word. He had been found dead, one morning, seated before the open fireplace, in which the ashes lay as cold as his own silent body. In the ashes were the charred embers of a heavy paper that had been folded up, perhaps a parchment, but evidently his will, which he had destroyed without having time to make another, if such had been his intent, and the property went to Percy as direct heir. Whether the stern old man's stubborn intent had been carried out at the last, or not, no one ever knew.

The bodies of Jessaline and the Tory, Pepper, were found, cold in death, by the girl's father on his return to the house, and the double tragedy at once attributed to Uri, who was supposed to have killed them and escaped. He was never heard from more, having penetrated into the heart of the swamps where he probably died, if he did not take his own life. Old Dan Giles lived for years in the old jail-like building, and finally died alone and in misery, in the same room that sheltered his

daughter. He used to go and sit there for hours at a time, though he would never disturb a thing in the room. Her fingers had touched them last, and he would not have their position altered.

Henry heard of Jessaline's sad end as it was reported, and grieved over it for a day, forgetting it the next. He was not different from other men. The bauble had been his for a toy. He had worn off the polish, the freshness of the young life, and then the toy had become an old story. Why should he think of it more? It was sad, of course, but he did not love her, so why should the affair make him mourn for long? Men are ever thus, unless actuated by deep and honest love. Woman, they crave for her beauty, and then, when possessed, the flavor tested, the soul probed to the utmost depth, she is an old song, a discarded toy, a shattered temple. Thrice foolish is the woman who gives herself to man unless he loves her, for love alters all rules.

And you, oh, pretty maidens, and matrons of more experience. You who have marked with your dainty pencil, some fragments of the above, how is it with you? Are you not

worse even than your sterner sex? You satiate your curiosity, often with one who truly loves you, and then, as you weary of him, sink to a common level by arguing that man is but man after all, and curiosity is again followed up, sometimes with his dearest friend as the object. He is horrified that his idol could be so base, so vile. You laugh at him, and scoff at the idea that another is any more vile or different from him. You argue: "Man is but man, what matters it, one or ten more or less?" Then he either descends to your level, or accepts the inevitable, and hangs himself in the heat of his injured self-esteem, or goes and takes another, who is false also in taking him, and so society forms itself into a mart of social barter and trade, and yet the heavens do not fall. You scoff at this, oh, reader. Yes, but hundreds upon hundreds will feel a momentary fancy, and say, "'tis true," as the past floats by them in retrospective. A cloud from out the past floats before me. I see faces—fair faces. Yes, you too belong to this vast army I have just described.

Capt. Harry Strong and his sweet wife worried much over Kate, until they received a

message telling what had happened, when they blessed her fervently, and went about their duties as usual.

"He may be a rebel," said the wife, "but he is cut out for a hero."

"He seems to have won you both," said her husband, with a laugh.

Teddy kept out of the clutches of the British, and after the war was over, became a store keeper in Charleston, where he interested himself hugely in the politics of the day, and grew to be quite a speaker at town meetings. The Rev. Mr. Bell lived to officiate at the double wedding which occurred at the Fuller homestead shortly after the return of peace. It was made a celebration of the Continental victory as well as a wedding, and was remembered for years in those parts. Percy sold out his interests in England, and built a residence close by that of his father-in-law, and in years to come, the children of the two families made a large gathering of relatives on all festive occasions, during which Roger was the happiest old grandfather in the States.

* * * * *

In the meantime, Henry, who had thrown

himself recklessly to the front in every engagement that had been held in his vicinity, as if in hopes that a stray shot would put an end to his existence, was quite seriously wounded and was sent to his home to be taken care of. Ruth was told of it, and she grew pale and trembled at the news. She had been unforgiving, but she loved him still. Suppose that he should die and only have as a remembrance on his death bed, her sternness. She said nothing to anyone, but threw on her wraps and flew to him. He was surprised, and would have raised up in bed at her approach, but she motioned him to remain quiet.

Her face bore a sweet expression that he had never seen there before. She hesitated for a moment as she took his hand and bent over him. A blush came to her cheeks and she bent quickly and kissed him on the lips.

"Do not speak now," she whispered. "Wait."

They sat thus for a time, clasped hand in hand, and his eyes sought her face, which was averted and thoughtful. His heart was bounding high with hope, and the sun of a brighter destiny seemed to be sending its first rays through the darkness that had gathered to

shut out happiness from his future. Was that past to be forgiven at last?

"Are you much hurt?" she asked softly, her lips trembling.

"Not seriously," he answered in a weak voice. "It was little more than a flesh wound, and I only suffer from the loss of blood."

"You will grow stronger under good nursing, and you know my ability in that direction."

"Ruth—Ruth!" he cried, starting up in spite of her. What do you mean?"

"That I will remain here and nurse you through your trouble."

"But after, after that, Ruth dear. Oh! my love, the world has been dark without you. I tried to seek death in the battle, because life without you was nothing to me. Without you I do not care to live, I will not. I will tear all these bandages and—"

"Hush—hush! you know not what you say," she cried, her face paling slightly. "I love you, dear, and will always hold you nearest and dearest in my heart. Oh! Henry, do you not know, can you not see, that it is that, that has been making me miserable? I

am jealous of every word or thought you gave that other. How do I know, that while we would be living in seeming happiness, your thoughts might turn to her, and you wish that you were with her."

"No! no, dear, never," he cried. "You are my wife and all in all to me. Never again will I be false in thought. I will never give you cause for a moment's suspicion. You, and you always, shall have my love."

"But she—she was the first," burying her face in the bed at his side, "I was your wife in name only, and she—she, oh! Henry, *she had you*, while I prayed alone for your coming. I longed for you while you lay—"

"Hush—dear! she is dead."

"Dead?"

"Yes, dead in fact, as she was always in my heart. Ruth, Ruth forgive me."

She could not resist the appeal, and sank into his arms to meet the kisses he rained upon her lips. There was no need of old Aunt Kitty that night, for his wife guarded him jealously, and never left him again, a fact that gave cause for rejoicing again in the two households. And Henry was the better hus-

band from that one fault, for his every hour, his every thought was devoted to making his wife feel that the past, except as she was in it, was forgotten.

Strange as it may seem, the two cousins were different enough in appearance to cause little trouble or mistakes as to their identity, and as they grew older the difference became more apparent. Henry, too, had political ambitions, and mingled much in the young politics of the period, filling many responsible positions in the state. Walter and Percy, however, were content to bask in the sunshine of their own homes, and it was a constant source of pleasant rivalry between them as to whose wife was given the most honor at the various gatherings they attended. The two wives never failed to go together, when the blonde and brunette types were a pretty foil, each to the other, and Roger, who always attended with them, once slapped the two young husbands on the back, and nodding his head in the direction of the two beauties, surrounded by their society courtiers, and said:

“Lucky boys!” Have I not a right to be a proud old man, with five such children?”

And Ruth, approaching just then, laid a small hand on his arm, smiled up into his face, and said:

“Six, is it not, or are Henry and I excluded since he has become a good man?”

Roger kissed her fondly, and shook Henry by the hand.

“What fools we were to be mistaken in these two,” he said, taking a hand of each, and looking into their faces.

“Especially with Aunt Kitty’s mole,” said Henry, laughing, and the ladies came over to join them at the sound. Surely they had not lived in vain.

THE END.



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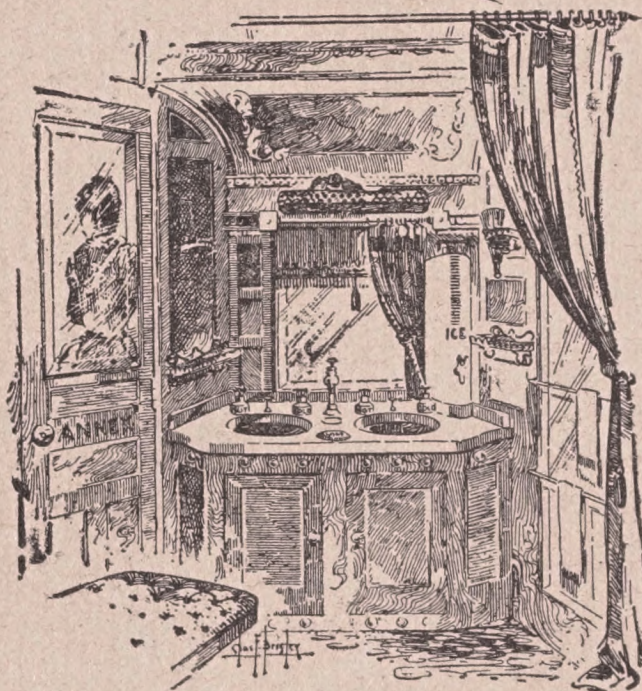
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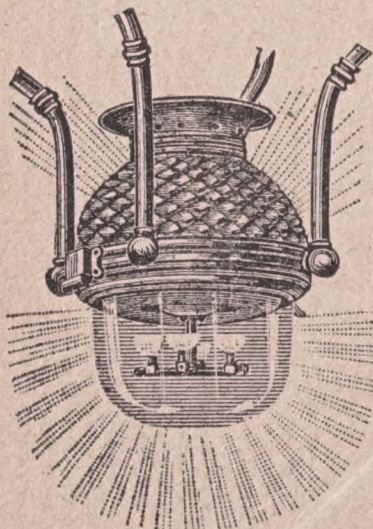
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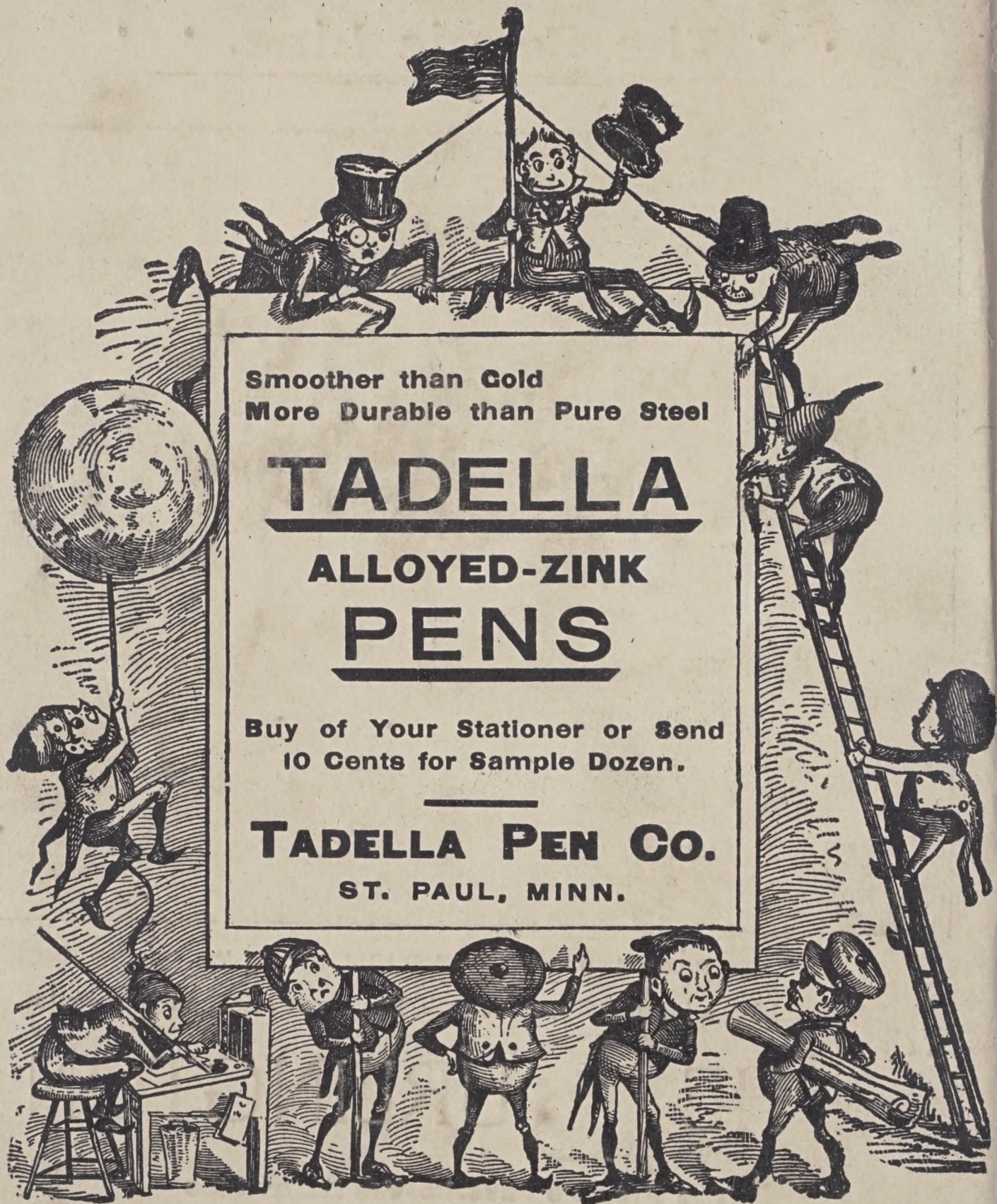
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